

# **VAJIRAM & RAVI**

( Institute for IAS Examination )

## **GENERAL STUDIES**

### **ANCIENT INDIA**

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**G.S. Prelim**

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**VAJIRAM & RAVI**  
**ANCIENT INDIA**  
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**VAJIRAM & RAVI**  
**CHAPTER - 1**

**PERIODISATION OF ANCIENT INDIAN HISTORY AND  
INTRODUCTION**

1	Palaeolithic Age	5,00,000 B.C. to 10,000 B.C.	(a) Early or lower Palaeolithic Phase (b) Middle Palaeolithic Phase 50,000 BC to 40,000 BC (c) Upper Palaeolithic Phase 40,000 to 10,000 BC
2	Mesolithic Age	9,000 BC to 4,000 BC	
3	Neolithic Age	5,000 BC to 1,800 BC	
4	Chalcolithic Age	1800 BC to 1000 BC	
5	Iron Age	Started from 1000 BC onwards	
6	Indus Civilisation (Harappan Civilisation)	2900 BC to 1700 BC	(a) Early Harappan phase 2900 BC to 2500 BC (b) Middle Harappan Phase (Mature Harappan Phase) 2500 – 2000 BC (c) Late Harappan Phase 2000 BC to 1700 BC
7	Vedic Period	1500 BC to 600 BC	
8	Pre-Mauryan Age	6 <sup>th</sup> Century BC to 4 <sup>th</sup> Century BC	
9	Mauryan Age	321 BC to 184 BC	
10	Post – Mauryan Age	200 BC to 300 AD	
11	Gupta Period	4 <sup>th</sup> Century AD to 6 <sup>th</sup> Century AD	
12	Age of Harsha	606 AD to 647 AD	
13	Chalukyas of Badami	543 AD to 755 AD	
14	Pallavas of Kanchipuram	560 AD to 903 AD	

**ERAS**

1. **The Vikrama Era (56 BC)** traditionally founded by a king called Vikramaditya, who drove the Sakas out of Ujjain and founded the era to celebrate the victory.
2. **The Saka Era (78 AD)** was, according to tradition, founded by a Saka King who occupied Ujjain 137 years after Vikramaditya. Kanishka may have in fact founded this era.
3. **The Gupta Era (320 AD)** was probably founded by Chandra Gupta I.
4. **The Harsha Era (606 AD)** was founded by Harshavardhana of Kannauj and was popular in Northern India for a century or two after his death.

5. **The Kalachuri Era (248 AD)** was perhaps founded by a small dynasty called the Traikutakas (Trikuta).
6. **The Lakshmana Era of Bengal (1119 AD)**: It is said to have been founded by King Lakshmana Sena.
7. **The Kaliyuga (3102 BC) Era** was usually used for religious dates and rarely for political events.
8. **Buddha Era of (544 BC)** was in use in Ceylon from an uncertain date. Often used for religious purposes.
9. **The Era of Mahavira (528 BC)**: The Jainas use it for religious purposes.
10. **The Saptarshi or Laukika Era**: Used in Kashmir in the Middle ages, and recorded in cycles of one hundred years, each cycle commencing 76 years after each Christian century.
11. **Nevar Era of Nepal (878 AD)** was used in Nepal.
12. **Kollam Era of Kerala (825 AD)** was used in Kerala.
13. **The Era of Vikramaditya VI Chalukya (1075 AD)** was used in the early medieval period.

## INTRODUCTION

- It is the river Indus which gave India its name. The Indians knew this river as Sindhu, and the Persians, who found difficulty in pronouncing the initial S, called it Hindu. From Persia, the word passed to Greece, where the whole of India became known by the name of the western river.
- The ancient Indians knew their subcontinent as Jambudvipa (the continent of the jambu tree) or Bharatavarsha (the land of the sons of Bharata, a legendary emperor). With the Muslim invasion, the Persian name returned in the form 'Hindustan', and those of its inhabitants who followed the old religion became known as 'Hindu'.
- The ancient civilisation of India differs from those of Egypt, Mesopotamia and Greece, in that its traditions have been preserved without a break down to the present day. India and China have the oldest continuous cultural traditions in the world.
- William Jones's initiative led to the founding of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784 with Jones himself as President. He translated Sakuntala, Gita Govinda and the law book of Manu into English.
- Charles Wilkins translated the Bhagavad Gita and Hitopadesa into English.
- Max Muller who had a Sanskrit name, Moksha Mula wrote two books- "India, what can it teach us?" and "Biography of Words and Home of the Aryas". Max Muller also edited, 'The Rig Veda' and also another book called 'Sacred Books of the East'.
- James Prinsep interpreted the earliest Brahmi script for the first time and was able to read the edicts of the great emperor Ashoka.
- In 1862, Alexander Cunningham was appointed to the post of Archaeological Surveyor of India. Cunningham was known as the father of Indian archaeology.
- Archaeology is the science which enables us to dig the old mounds systematically, in successive layers to form an idea of the material life of the people.
- The study of coins is called Numismatics.
- The study of inscriptions is called Epigraphy, and the study of old writing used in inscriptions and other old records is called Palaeography.

- Under John Marshall's tenure as Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India, there was discovery of the Indus civilisation.
- The enormous Sanskrit – German dictionary generally known as the St. Petersburg Lexicon was produced in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by German Scholars Otto Bohtlingk and Rudolf Roth.
- The first systematic history of ancient India was prepared in 1904 by Vincent Arthur Smith in his book 'Early History of India'.
- James Mill in his book 'History of British India' was the first to periodise Indian history on communal lines. He classified ancient Indian history as Hindu history, medieval Indian history as Muslim history and modern Indian history as the British period. This classification is so deeply embedded in the consciousness of those studying India that it prevails to this day.
- Radiocarbon dating is the method according to which the dates of the excavated material remains are fixed.
- Brahmi script is written from left to right; considered to be a precursor of all the Indian scripts, except the Indus script. Kharoshti script is written from right to left; used only in north-western India.
- The Greek historian Herodotus who wrote the book 'Historica' is considered as the father of History.

## **SOURCES**

The sources of ancient Indian history are multifaceted varying from literature to coins and inscriptions to archaeological remains.

### **A. VEDIC PERIOD (1500 BC TO 600 BC)**

Information about the Vedic period comes from Vedic literature. The scholars have divided the Vedic period into the early Vedic period and the later Vedic period. The only source of information which belongs to the early Vedic period is the Rig Veda. All the other components of the Vedic literature belong to the later Vedic period. The Vedic literature consists of the Samhitas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas and Upanishads. There are also six Vedangas and four Upa-Vedas. The Samhitas are collections of hymns sung in praise of various gods. They are four in number – Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Yajur Veda and Atharva Veda.

**Rig Veda:** The word 'Veda' comes from the root 'vid', i.e. to know. It is specifically applied to a branch of literature considered to be 'Sruti' i.e. sacred knowledge or divine revelation. The Rig Veda literally means Veda of praise. It is purely a religious work, and most of the hymns are all invocations of the Gods. Rig Veda is divided into ten books or mandalas. The oldest hymns are contained in the mandalas II to VII known as 'Family books' on account of their compositions of different Sargas families. Rig Veda consists of 1017 hymns (suktas) and supplemented by 11 others called Valakhilyas. Rig Veda is the only book of the Vedic literature which was dated to the early Vedic period, so it is the oldest of the four samhitas. In mandala III of the Rig Veda, composed by Visvamitra, we find the famous Gayatri Mantra, addressed to the Solar deity Savitri. In the Xth mandala of the Rig Veda, the hymn on creation is called the Purushasukta hymn, which is the largest hymn of the Rig Veda, which also mentions the chaturvarna scheme of society. The first and the tenth mandalas of the Rig Veda are considered the latest based on the style of their composition and the nature of material culture revealed by them. The composition of the Rig Veda began by 1500 BC and ended by 1000 BC.

**Sama Veda:** Its' name is derived from Saman, a song or melody. It consists of hymns taken from the Rig Veda and set to tune for singing. It is called the 'book of chants', and the origins of Indian music are traced to it.

**Yajur Veda:** The Veda of formulae consists of various mantras for recitation and rules to be observed at the time of sacrifice. The two royal ceremonies of 'Rajasuya' and 'Vajpeya' are mentioned for the first

time in this Veda. In contrast to the Rig Veda and the Sama Veda which are in verse entirely, this one is in both verse and prose. According to the Satapatha Brahmana, the Rig Veda, Sama Veda and Yajur Veda constitute the 'Traya Veda' and are composed by Aryans.

**Atharva Veda:** It was compiled by Atharva sage, a non-Aryan. It is the Veda of formulae, charms and spells to ward off evils and diseases. It throws light on the beliefs and practices of the non-Aryans. It also has the origins of Indian medicine. It is considered the most useful Veda since it contains information of diverse nature about agriculture, cattle rearing, industry and is nearer to the common people and is filled with many non-Aryan words. The Sama Veda, Yajur Veda and Atharva Veda were composed in the later Vedic period dating from 1000 BC to 600 BC.

**Brahmanas:** The Brahmanas are prose commentaries on the four Vedas. The subject matter is ritual. They deal with the science of sacrifice. It provides us information about sacrifices and ceremonies and theology, philosophy, manners, and customs of the later Vedic period. There are a total of 18 brahmanas the most important of which is the Satapatha Brahmana. Other important Brahmanas are Aitreya, Kausitaki, Tandyamaha, Jaiminia, Taittiriya, Gopatha.

**Aranyakas:** These are forest books which were composed in the forest and were meant for study in the forest. They deal with mysticism and symbolism of sacrifice and priestly philosophy. The Aranyakas contain transitional material between the mythology and ritual of the Samhitas and Brahmanas, on the one hand, and the philosophical speculations of the Upanishads, on the other.

**Upanishads:** The word Upanishad means 'to be seated at the feet of the Guru to receive the teaching'. There are a total of 108 Upanishads of which 12 are considered to be 'Shruti' or of divine revelation. The Upanishads are philosophical texts most of which seem to have been written by Kshatriyas. The Upanishads are critical of the Vedas' ritualistic interpretation and give a spiritual interpretation of the Vedas and stress on 'Jnanamarga' (path of knowledge) to attain salvation. The central theme of their metaphysics is 'tat tvam asi' (thou art that) which is found in Chandogya Upanishad. The idea of rebirth first appears in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. The concept of 'Unity in diversity' is drawn from Mundaka Upanishad. The earliest reference to Lord Krishna is in Chandogya Upanishad. Shiva is mentioned for the first time in Svetasvatara Upanishad. The Upanishads constitute the Vedanta not only because they constitute the last part of them, but also because the Vedas reach the highest metaphysical state in the Upanishads. Upanishads are considered to be the highest philosophy ever conceived by the human mind. Buddhist texts are rich with material drawn from the Upanishads.

### B. PRE-MAURYAN AGE (6TH - 4TH CENTURY BC)

**Punch-marked coins:** The rise of the Mahajanapadas in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC and agricultural surplus, and the rise of arts and crafts that facilitated trade and commerce led to the appearance of coins for the first time in the pre-Mauryan age. They are Punch-marked coins mostly of silver mined from Kharag mines in Monghyr. The metals were punched with certain marks as hills, trees, bull, elephant, fish, crescent etc. The coins do not bear any images or inscriptions of Gods or kings. These are not cast coins and were first issued by the traders and bankers and later by the Kings also. Their areas of use were also limited. The use of punch-marked coins was indicative of a more developed economy.

### Archaeological remains

1. Many urban centres such as Indraprastha, Hastinapura, Shravasti, Varanasi, Rajagriha, Champa on the banks of rivers in north India.
2. Northern Black Polished Ware (NBPW) type of pottery was the characteristic feature of this age.
3. Iron use increased in this period.
4. Mud bricks were used for the construction of cities.
5. Punch-marked coins were used to facilitate trade and commerce.

**Brahmanical literature**

It consisted of the 'Vedangas' or the Vedas' limbs whose study was necessary to properly understand the Vedas. The Vedangas were written in the form of 'Sutras' i.e. condensed prose style intended for memorization there are six vedangas : (a) Shiksha (Phonetics), (b) Kalpa (rituals), (c) Vyakarana (grammar), (d) Nirukta (etymology), (e) Chandas (metrics) (f) Jyotisha (astronomy, not astrology). The Vedangas, in contrast to the Vedic literature proper, are called 'Smriti' or literature handed down by tradition because they are of human origin.

The Kalpa sutras are divided into three classes:

1. **Srautasutras** – concerned with rituals of great scarifices of Agni, soma, animals. The sulvasutras, which are the oldest books on Indian geometry are part of the Srautasutras.
2. **Grihyasutras** – concerned with the domestic ceremonies and sacrifices to be performed by the householder.
3. **Dharmasutras** – concerned with the legal aspects of life and are the foundation for the Dharmasastras such as the laws of Manu.

Four minor Vedas called 'Upavedas' came to be written based on the Vedic literature. They are:

1. Ayurveda – concerned with medicine
2. Silpa Veda – concerned with sculpture
3. Gandharva Veda – concerned with music
4. Dhanur Veda – concerned with warfare

**Buddhist literature:** It consists of the Pali canon in three pitakas – Suttapitaka, Vinayapitaka, Abhidhammapitaka.

**Suttapitaka** – It consists of the speeches and messages of the Buddha. It was composed by Ananda in the first Buddhist council at Rajagriha in 483 BC.

**Vinayapitaka** consists of the monastic code with rules of behaviour for the Sangha monks and nuns. It was composed by Upali in the 1st Buddhist council at Rajagriha in 483 BC.

**Abhidhammapitaka** – It is a compilation of philosophical sayings. It was composed by Mogaliputta Tissa (Upagupta) in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Buddhist council at Pataliputra in 250 BC.

**Jain Literature:** It was written in Prakrit. Earlier Jain literature was a set of 14 books called Purvas. They are now lost. 12 Angas were written, based on 14 Purvas.

**Foreign Authors**

- (1) Herodotus wrote 'Historica'. It talks about trade relations of India with Persia.
- (2) Aristobolus wrote 'History of the war'. He came to India along with Alexander.

**C. MAURYAN PERIOD (321-184 BC)****Archaeological remains:**

1. Use of Iron was on a more extensive scale
2. Northern Black Polished Ware (NBPW) use continued with an increase in variety, number and area.
3. Burnt bricks were used for the first time in the Mauryan period.
4. Ring wells were also identified for the first time in the Mauryan Period.
5. Even in the Mauryan period, we have no evidence of usage of gold coins. Rupayarupa and Pana were the silver coins, whereas Tamarupa were the copper coins used in the Mauryan period.

6. Many wooden palaces and halls were unearthed from the Mauryan period.

**Kautilya's Arthashastra:** It is the most important literary source of the Mauryan period. It is a book on political economy. It was written in Sanskrit. Arthashastra was divided into 15 adhikarnas (parts). It gives us an idea of the functioning of the Mauryan state. Kautilya is also known by names as Chanakya and Vishnugupta. Kautilya is considered as Indian Machiavelli. Chanakya also wrote a book called ChandraGuptaKatha highlighting the achievements of the first Mauryan emperor Chandragupta Maurya.

**Megasthenes's Indica:** Megasthenes was the Greek ambassador of Seleucus Nikator to the court of Chandragupta Maurya. His book 'Indica' is the foremost among all the foreign accounts for Mauryas. But its original is lost, and it has survived only as quotations in the texts of classical Greek and Latin writers. It gives an outline of Mauryan polity, society and economy.

**Deimachus:** Antiochus I, the successor of Seleucus Nikator removed Megasthenes and appointed Deimachus as ambassador to the court of Bindusara. He wrote a separate account of India.

**Justin:** He was the Greek author of the book 'Epitome'. He writes about the Mauryan period and calls Chandragupta Maurya as Sandracottus. He says that Sandracottus visited the court of Alexander and went on to liberate India from Greek rule.

**Plutarch:** He was also a Greek who in his book 'Lives' talks about the Mauryan period. Plutarch says that Chandragupta Maurya with an army of 6,00,000 soldiers overran the whole of India.

**Strabo:** He was also a Greek who wrote the book 'Geography'. In this book, he gives frequent references to the Mauryan period. He often quotes from Megasthenes's Indica.

## Indian Buddhist Literature

- (a) Jatakas reveal a general picture of the Mauryan period's socio-economic conditions – Jatakas are stories of previous births of the Buddha.
- (b) Digha Nikaya helps in determining the influence of Buddhist ideas on Mauryan polity.
- (c) Vamsathapakasini gives us information about the Kshatriya origin of the Mauryas.
- (d) Arya Manjusri Mool Kalpa, a Buddhist book written later, also references the Mauryans and Guptas.

**Ceylonese Chronicles:** Mahavamsa and Dipavamsa are Buddhist works in Pali that describe Ashoka's part in spreading Buddhism to Sri Lanka. Mahavamsa Tika and Mahabodhi Vamsa also narrate the Mauryan role in promoting Buddhism in Sri Lanka.

**Tibetan Buddhist Sources:** Books such as Ashokavadana and Divyavadana written in Tibet in Sanskrit give an account of the Mauryan emperors.

**Parsistaparvan:** It is a book written by Hemachandra. This Jaina work talks about the conversion of Chandragupta Maurya to Jainism. He then renounced the throne in favour of his son, Bindusara and is said to have gone to Shravanabelagola near Mysore, where he deliberately starved to death in the approved Jaina fashion.

**Vishakhadatta's Mudrarakshasa:** This book written in the Gupta period deals with the strategies of Kautilya and mentions Chandragupta Maurya as being of lowly origin. He calls Chandragupta Maurya as 'Vrishala' or 'Kulhina'.

**Puranas:** Puranas being composed by the Brahmanas are biased against the Mauryas and call them not only Sudras and unrighteous, they give us the Chronology and list of Mauryan rulers.

**Ashokan Edicts:** There are 14 Major Rock Edicts, 7 Major Pillar Edicts, 3 Minor Rock Edicts, 3 Minor Pillar Edicts and 3 Cave Edicts located at various places in the Indian Subcontinent. They were deciphered by James Prinsep of the English East India Company in 1837. Majority of them are in the nature of Ashoka's proclamations to the public at large. Though Prakrit is the language used in them,

the script varied from region to region (Kharoshthi in the north-west, Greek and Aramaic in the west and Brahmi in the rest of India).

### **Other Inscriptions**

1. Junagarh rock inscription of Rudradaman-I informs us that the famous Sudarsana lake was constructed by Pushyagupta, the brother-in-law and governor of Chandragupta Maurya at the orders of the latter.
2. Sohagura and Mahasthan inscriptions which probably belonged to Chandragupta Maurya's reign deal with famine relief measures.
3. Nagarjuna hill cave inscription of Dasaratha talks about the dedication of caves to Ajivikas.

### **D. POST – MAURYAN PERIOD (2ND CENTURY B.C. TO 3RD CENTURY A.D.)**

#### **Inscriptions**

1. Junagarh rock inscription of Saka ruler of Ujjain Rudradaman-I dated 150 AD describes the achievements of Rudradaman-I. This is the earliest inscription in chaste Sanskrit. This is the earliest epigraphic evidence of vishti or forced labour. This inscription informs us that Sudarsana lake was constructed by Pushyagupta at the orders of Chandragupta Maurya. Canals were taken out of this lake by Tusaspa, the provincial governor during Ashoka's time. This lake was repaired during the time of Rudradaman-I. Later, it seems that the lake was further repaired by Parnadatta during the times of the Gupta ruler Skandagupta.
2. A number of inscriptions have been found at Nasik associated with Satavahana rulers of Deccan. These inscriptions give us the territorial extent of the Satavahana Kingdom, the religious beliefs and practices of the Satavahanas and the economic activities during the period. They also provide us with an idea about the Saka-Satavahana conflict.
3. Besnagar pillar inscription from Vidisha talks about the pillar constructed by Heliodorus, an ambassador of Indo-Greek king of Taxila called Antialcides to the court of Sunga ruler of Vidisa, Kasiputra Bhagabhadra also called as Bhagavata. The inscription is recorded in honour of god of gods Vasudeva.
4. Hathigumpha inscription in Prakrit in Udayagiri hills of Orissa records the achievements of Kharavela of Kalinga, a Chedi ruler.
5. Sarnath inscription highlights the achievements of Kanishka, the Kushana ruler.
6. Tamil Brahmi inscriptions have been found from South India. They are about 72 in number and are found from pottery pieces and from caves. Such inscriptions from caves are known as Damili inscriptions.

#### **Coins**

1. With the coming of Indo-Greeks, gold coins were issued for the first time in Indian history. Casted and moulded coins were also issued for the first time. The casted and moulded coins had inscription and images of gods and kings.
2. Sakas issued no gold coins. They mostly issued copper coins and rarely silver coins.
3. Parthians (Pahlavas) issued no gold coins. They mostly issued copper coins and rarely silver coins.
4. Kushanas issued gold coins on the largest scale upto that period. They issued standard gold coins. They also issued the largest number of cooper coins which indicates that currency was part of the life of a common man. The Kushanas rarely issued silver coins.
  - 1) Wema Kadphises was the first to introduce gold coins on a significant scale among the Kushans. He was a devotee of Shiva and so issued coins bearing the image of Shiva, the Nandi and trident.

- 2) Kanishka issued coins bearing the terms Wudo (Buddha), Atso (fire god) and Meyo (sun god).
- 3) Huvishka issued coins of a greater variety than Kanishka. He issued coins with the image of Harihar and also issued Chaturbhuj coins which contain 4-armed god Vishnu.
5. Satavahanas also issued coins in large numbers in gold, silver, copper, lead and potene. Vashistaputra Pulamayi-I issued coins showing a ship with double mast found on the Coromandel coast. Yajnasri Satkarni issued coins bearing the fish symbol, boat symbol and a Chaitya Symbol which are known as Ujjain type of coins.
6. Cholas, Cheras and Pandyas in the Sangam age issued coins of gold and copper, not of silver. Pon, Kasu and Kanam were gold coins issued by them.
7. 68 hordes of Roman coins have been found all over the country of which 57 hordes are found in south India. The Roman gold coins are known as Aurius. Roman silver coins are known as Denarius and Solidus. India had a favourable balance of trade with the Roman Empire.

### **Literature**

1. **Sangam period:** Sangam literature was composed in the course of three assemblies. It was poetic in nature. Based on the theme of love and war. Pandyan kings patronized the Sangam poets. It was produced over three to four centuries. Prominent works into Ettutogai, patupattu, Padinenkilkanakku, Silappadigaram, Manimegalai and Sivaga Sindamani.

**Ettutogai** – It means eight anthologies. It mainly contains poems on love and war.

**Padinenkilkanakku** – It means Eighteen Minor Works. These poems are mostly moral and ethical messages. It contains Tirukkural written by Thiruvallur and is known as the bible of Tamil land.

**Silappadigaram** – It means the Jewelled anklet. It is a Tamil epic written by Ilangovadigal. It deals with the tragic story of Kovalan, his wife kannagi and his affair with a dancer Madhavi.

**Manimegalai** – Written by Sattanar is a Buddhist supplement to Silappadigaram. It is the story of Manimegalai, the daughter of Kovalan and Kannagi.

**Sivaga Sindamani** – Written by Tiruttakkadevar, a Jaina, it is the story of Sivaga who ultimately becomes a Jaina monk in the end.

2. Patanjali, a great grammarian, wrote the Sanskrit book 'Mahabhasya' in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC 'Mahabhasya' itself is a commentary of the great Sanskrit grammar work called 'Asthadhyayi' by Panini in 4<sup>th</sup> century BC.

3. Manu is the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC wrote the book Manusmriti which is the most famous dharmashastra.

4. Buddhist work in Sanskrit in the post-Mauryan period includes the following:

- 1) Asvaghosha – He wrote Buddcharita, Saundarananda, Sariputraprakarana, Vajrosuchi, Sraddhotpada and Gandistotragatha.
- 2) Asanga – He wrote Sutralankara and Yogacharabhumisastra.
- 3) Nagarjuna – He wrote Madhyamika – Karika and Surilekha.
- 4) Aryadeva – He wrote Chatushsatika, a criticism of brahmanical practices.
- 5) Aryasura – He wrote Jatakamala, a Sanskrit version of the Jataka tales.

5. Foreigners' books in the post-Mauryan period relevant to India:

- 1) Periplus of the Erythrean Sea – written in Greek by an anonymous writer between 80-115 A.D. It describes the Roman trade in the Red Sea, Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. Mention is made about various Indian ports.

- 2) Ptolemy's Geography – Written in Greek in about 150 AD. It also mentions the flourishing trade between India and the Roman Empire in the post-Mauryan period. Mention is made about various Indian ports.
- 3) Pliny's Naturalis Historia: This is written in Latin in the First Century AD and tells us about trade between India and Italy.

## E. SOURCES IN THE GUPTA PERIOD

### Literature

Gupta emperors patronized Sanskrit as the court language which was spoken by the higher classes while the lower classes and women spoke Prakrit. Gupta period represented a bright phase in the history of classical literature and developed an ornate style which was different from the old simple Sanskrit. From this period onwards, we find a greater emphasis on verse than on prose.

Literature in the Gupta period:

- 1) Secular literature
- 2) Religious literature
- 3) Scientific literature

### 1. Secular Literature

- (a) **Kalidas:** He was the court poet of Chandragupta Vikramaditya II. He was a great poet and dramatist. Considered as Shakespeare of the East. His works include,
  - **Abhijanasakuntalam** considered to be one of the 100 best literary works in the world. Love story of King Dushyanta and Shakuntala whose son Bharatha became a famous ruler. William Jones translated this book into English, and it filled the romantic imagination of Europe.
  - **Malvikagnimitram** – Pushyamitra Sunga's son Agnimitra was viceroy of Vidisha. Mentions the defeat of a yavana ruler by Vasumitra, the son of Agnimitra on the banks of a river Sind (Kalisind).
  - **Raghuvamsa** – speaks of the all-round victories of Rama, and may indirectly refer to some Gupta conquests.
  - **Kumarasambhav** – deals with the courtship of Shiva and Parvati and the birth of their son Skanda.
  - **Meghadutam** – lyrical poem containing the message from the lovelorn yaksha to his wife pining across the northern mountains in Alaka.
  - **Ritusamhara** – describes the six seasons in relation to Shringara.
- (b) **Sudraka:** Wrote the Mrichchhakatika (the little clay cart) the plot of which centres around the love of a poor brahmana Charudatta for the wealthy, beautiful and cultured courtesan Vasantasena.
- (c) **Visakhadatta:** Wrote Mudrarakshasa, which deals with the strategies of Kautilya and mentions Chandragupta Maurya as being of lowly origin. Visakhadatta also wrote Devichandraguptam which is the story of Chandragupta II's accession to the throne after killing Basana (the Saka king), Ramagupta (Chandragupta II's brother) and his subsequent marriage to Dhruvadevi.
- (d) **Bhasa:** Thirteen plays written by Bhasa belong to this period, the most famous of which is Svapnavasavadattam.
- (e) **Magha:** Wrote Sisupalvadh and Bhaktikavya.

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- (f) **Kamandaka**: Wrote Nitisara belonging to Chandragupta I's period, is the Gupta equivalent of Kautilya's Arthashastra.
- (g) **Vajjika**: Wrote Kaumudimahotsava. It talks about the accession of Chandragupta I to the throne.
- (h) **Amarsimha**: Wrote Amarkosha, which is a dictionary in Sanskrit.
- (i) **Vatsayana**: Wrote Kamasutra, which is the first systematic enunciation of the art of love.
- (j) **Law Texts**: Such as Brihaspati Smriti and Narada Smriti were written, which influenced Gupta emperors in the administration of justice.

## 2. Religious Literature

### (a) Hindu Works: Ramayana –

- Balakanda and Uttarakanda were added to it.
- Mahabharata – Anusasana Parva, Vana Parva and Santiparva added to it.
- Puranas such as Markandeya Purana, Brahma Purana, Vishnu Purana, Bhagvata Purana and Matsya Purana were written down.

### (b) Buddhist Works:

- Accounts of Fahien, the Chinese traveller in times of Chandragupta II.
- Tilsya Pannati of Yati Vrishaba contains information about Buddhism in Gupta age.
- Aryamanjusri Mookapa, though compiled later contains references to the Guptas.

### (c) Jain Works:

- Jinasena Suri's Harivamsapurana though belongs to later period, contains references to Guptas.

## 3. Scientific Literature

Consisted of the works of Aryabhatta and Varahamihira.

- (a) **Aryabhatta**: In the book 'Suryasiddhanta', Aryabhatta examines and explains the true cause of the solar and lunar eclipses. His calculation of the size of the earth is very near to the modern estimation. He was the first Indian astronomer to discover and declare that the earth rotates around its axis. He was also the author of Aryabhattiyam, which deals with arithmetic's, geometry, algebra and probably trigonometry.
- (b) **Varahamihira**: His book 'Brihatsamhita' is an encyclopaedia of astronomy, botany, physical geography and natural history. His other works are Pancha Siddhantika, Brihat Jataka etc.

## Inscriptions

1. Total of 42 inscriptions are known from the Gupta empire. Out of them, 27 are engraved on stone.
2. History of Samudragupta is known from his Prayag inscription found on the pillar of Ashoka. It's in Sanskrit and in 33 lines. It was authored by Harisena and it highlights the military conquests of Samudragupta. Eran (Airana) inscription of Samudragupta also praises him. It mentions a district called Airikina. It talks about a city Bhognagar on the banks of river Vetravati.
3. History of Chandragupta Vikramaditya can be known from Iron pillar inscription in Sanskrit at Mehrauli which gives a good account of a ruler "Chandra" as having conquered area from Bengal to the Indus. It mentions of him as a Vaishnavaite. Most numbers of Gupta inscriptions were issued by Kumaragupta who is known for his Mandasor stone inscription authored by Vatsabhatta.

4. The achievements of Skandagupta are known from Bhitari and Junagarh inscriptions, both of which mention Skandagupta's victory over the invading Huns.
5. Damodarpur copper plate inscription in Bengal of Kumaragupta mentions a Vishaya (district) called Damodarpur. It mentions that the head of a Visaya called Vishayapati is assisted by Shresti (banker), Sarthavaha (trader) and Prathamakulika (artisan) and Prathamakayastha (scribe).
6. Bhanugupta's inscription at Eran (Airana) dated 510 AD gives the first inscriptional evidence of Sati. It mentions that Goparaja, the general of Bhanugupta died in the war and his widow committed sati.

### **Coins**

- (a) The Guptas issued the largest number of gold coins in the ancient period. Chandragupta I first issued gold coins known as Kumaradevi type of gold coins bearing an image of Queen Kumaradevi indicating joint kingship. He also issued coins of Aswametha type.
- (b) Samudragupta issued gold and copper coins. He issued gold coins of the lion-slayer-type, archer-type, horse-rider type and Veena-player type. Chandragupta II was the first Gupta emperor to issue silver coins. Kumaragupta issued coins known for their purity.

### **Characteristic Pottery Types in the Ancient Period**

Harappan age	Black and Red ware; black on Redware
Early Vedic Period	Ochre Coloured Pottery (OCP)
Later Vedic Period	Pointed Grey Ware (PGW)
Pre-Mauryan Age	Northern Black Polished Ware (NBPW)
Mauryan Age	Northern Black Polished Ware (NBPW)
Post-Mauryan age	Redware
Gupta age	Redware

### **Epics**

- (1) **Mahabharata:** It is the longest single poem in the world's literature. The Mahabharata is attributed to Sage Vyasa. Aryabhatta gives 3102 BC as the date of the Mahabharata war. Some historians say the war took place in 15<sup>th</sup> Century BC. Many historians say the war took place in 900 BC. Originally, the book consisted of 8800 verses and was called Jayasamhita. These were raised to 24,000 verses and were called Bharata. The final compilation brought the verses to 1,00,000 and came to be known as Satasahasri Samhita or the Mahabharata. It reflects the state of affairs from the 10<sup>th</sup> century BC to 4<sup>th</sup> century AD. The main narratives related to the Kaurava – Pandava conflict may belong to later Vedic times. The descriptive portion might be used for post-Vedic times, and the didactic portion generally for post-Maurya and Gupta times.
- (2) **Ramayana:** Ramayana is known as Adikavya. Ramayana of Valmiki originally consisted of 6000 verses which were raised to 12,000 verses and finally to 24,000. The composition of Ramayana started in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. The didactic portions were added later. The Ramayana passed through as many as five stages, and the fifth stage seems to be as late as the 12<sup>th</sup> century AD. As a whole, the text seems to have been composed later than the Mahabharata.

## THE STONE AGE

The earth is over 4000 million years old. The evolution of its crust shows four stages. The fourth stage is called the Quaternary, which is divided into Pleistocene (most recent) and Holocene (present); the former lasted between 2,000,000 and 10,000 years before the present and the latter began about 10,000 years ago. Man is said to have appeared on the earth in the early Pleistocene, when true ox, true elephant and true horse also originated. The early man seems to have moved around in Africa. The fossils of the early men have not been found in India. It appears that India was settled later than Africa, although the lithic technology of the subcontinent broadly evolved in the same manner as it did in Africa. The old stone age or the Palaeolithic culture of India developed in the Pleistocene period of the Ice Age.

**Paleolithic Age (Old Stone Age):** Man in the Palaeolithic age in India used tools of stone roughly dressed by crude shaping, which have been discovered throughout the country except for the alluvial plains of Indus, Ganga and Yamuna rivers. These tools were used for hunting, gathering as man did not know cultivation. The Paleolithic age continued till 9,000 BC and is divided into three phases according to the nature of the people's stone tools. The first phase is called the early or lower Palaeolithic between 5,00,000 BC and 50,000 BC, the second phase is called the middle Palaeolithic between 50,000 BC and 40,000 BC; and the third phase is called the upper Palaeolithic age between 40,000 BC and 10,000 BC.

### Early or Lower Palaeolithic Phase

1. This phase was between 5,00,000 BC to 50,000 BC.
2. Its characteristic feature is the use of hand-axes, cleavers and choppers.
3. Stone tools were used mainly for chopping, digging and skinning.
4. Early old stone age sites have been found in the valley of river Soan or Sohan in Punjab, now in Pakistan. Several sites also found in Kashmir, Thar desert, Belan valley of Mirzapur district in Uttar Pradesh and in the Narmada valley, and in the caves and rock shelters of Bhimbetka near Bhopal.

### Middle Palaeolithic Phase

1. This phase was between 50,000 BC to 40,000 BC
2. The Middle Palaeolithic industries are mainly based upon flakes. These flakes show many regional variations in different parts of India.
3. The principal tools are varieties of blades, points, borers and scrapers made of flakes.
4. The artefacts of this age are also found at several places on the river Narmada and also at several places, south of the Tungabhadra river.

### Upper Paleolithic Phase

1. This phase was between 40,000 BC to 10,000 BC
2. In this age the climate became comparatively warm
3. This phase is marked by the appearance of new flint industries and of men of the modern type (Homo Sapiens)
4. Blades and burins have been found in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Central Madhya Pradesh, Southern Uttar Pradesh, South Bihar. Caves and rock – Shelters in the Upper Palaeolithic phase have been discovered at Bhimbetka, near Bhopal.

## Mesolithic Age

1. In 9000 BC, it began an intermediate stage in stone age culture called the Mesolithic Age, which lasted till 4000 BC. This phase intervened as a transitional phase between the Paleolithic Age and the Neolithic or New Stone Age.
2. Climate change around 9000 BC brought about changes in fauna and flora and made it possible for human beings to move to new areas. Since then, there have not been any significant changes in climatic conditions.
3. The characteristic tools of the Mesolithic age are Microliths
4. The Mesolithic people lived on hunting, fishing and food gathering; at a later stage, they also domesticated animals.
5. The Mesolithic sites are found in good numbers in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Central and eastern India and also south of river Krishna. Adamgarh in Madhya Pradesh and Bagor in Rajasthan provide the earliest evidence for the domestication of animals around 5000 BC. The cultivation of plants was possibly around 7000 – 6000 BC.
6. Rock paintings from the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic ages have been found from Bhimbetka, about 45 Km south of Bhopal. Many birds, animals and human beings are painted.

## Neolithic Age

1. The Neolithic age dating between 5000 BC to 1800 BC is characterised by the cultivation of plants and animals' domestication.
2. The development of agriculture and cultivation of cereals transformed the nomadic hunters into sedentary farmers. This led to the beginning of village settlements, the manufacture of new types of tools and greater control over nature to exploit natural resources.
3. Neolithic tools such as ground stone tools, celts, adzes, chisels, axes, saws and burins have been found across India.
4. The earliest evidence of Neolithic settlements comes from Mehargarh on the bank of the river Bolan in the Kachhi plain of Baluchistan around 7000 BC showing the beginning of agriculture and domestication of animals. Crops cultivated include wheat, barley, plum and dates. Animals like cattle, goat and sheep were domesticated. Subsistence pattern is marked by mixed farming which rested on farming, herding supplemented by hunting.
5. Two representative Neolithic sites from the time range of 2500 BC–1500 BC have been found from Kashmir valley on the Jhelum river, they are Burzahom (the place of birch) and Gufkral (the cave of the potter). Excavations yield great number of typical bone tools, wild grains of wheat, pea, barley, bones of animals such as goat, sheep, cattle, etc. Excavations give indications of predominantly hunting economy in the beginning and later developing into agricultural economy. In Burzahom and Gufkral, Pit Dwellings are circular at top and rectangular at the bottom for protection from cold. At Burzahom, we have the characteristic feature of Dog burial along with human graves which is a cultural feature of Central Asian Neolithic culture.
6. Neolithic sites also are seen in Belan valley in Mirzapur district of Uttar Pradesh. Significant sites of the region are Koldihawa, Mahagara and Chopani – Mando. Belan valley culture shows an advanced sedentary life characterised by well-defined family units, standard pottery tradition, specialised tool types as celts, adzes, chisels. Belan valley agriculturists were the earliest agriculturists producing rice. Chopani Mando provides the earliest evidence of the use of pottery.
7. In the mid-Ganga valley region, excavations at Chirand, Chachar, Senuar show the emergence of sedentary village settlements at around 2000–1600 BC. Excavations indicate the cultivation of rice, wheat, barley, Pea. Chirand and Senuar yield a large number of remarkable bone tools.

8. In eastern India, early farmers emerged in the Assam region. This phase is tentatively dated around 2000 BC. Early farming communities of the region are characterised by shouldered celts, small axes and pottery.
9. Early settlement in South India has been found on hilly and dry Deccan plateau at sites such as Nagarjunakonda, Brahmagiri, Maski, Piklihal, Hallur Sanganakallu. Based on excavations, Neolithic culture of this region has been classified into three stages. The first stage is characterised by hand-made unsophisticated and unrefined kind of reddish-brown pottery, blade tools of chert and ground stone tools. The first phase (about 2500 BC) shows that a rudimentary form of cultivation had emerged, but people probably did not domesticate animals. New features which characterize the second phase are redware and domestication of animals. The third phase (around 1500 BC) is characterised by grey ware though the second phase's redware continued. Excavations yield evidence of the practice of agriculture – food gathering and hunting losing relevance. Neolithic tools of various types too have been discovered. Dwelling pits characterise early agriculturists' communal life in this region, cultivation of millet, wheat, moong, domestication of cattle such as cattle, sheep, goat, buffalo, etc.

**Chalcolithic Cultures:** The Neolithic age is followed by the Chalcolithic or stone-copper age, which generally occurred from 1800 – 1000 BC. This period was marked by the use of copper (the first metal used in India) as well as stone. They extend geographically from the Banas and Berach basins northeast of Udaipur through Malwa and into Western Maharashtra upto the Bhima Valley.

### The Chalcolithic era sites (non-Harappan)

The Chalcolithic cultures, basically village settlements identified based on their geographical locations, share certain common features such as painted pottery, which is mostly black-on-red, and a highly specialized stone blade/flake industry.

#### A. Rajasthan

In Rajasthan, Malwa and the northern Deccan, the beginnings of settled life are associated with chalcolithic phase and not neolithic phase. For eg. **Bagor** in eastern Rajasthan shows a transition from the hunting-gathering mesolithic phase to a chalcolithic and then an Iron age phase. Much more substantial evidence of early sedentary chalcolithic sites comes from areas rich in copper ores such as Rajasthan, Gujarat and Bihar.

In **Rajasthan**, there are some pieces of evidence of the **use of copper** from about 3000 BCE onwards such as:

1. **The Ahar culture**, on the outskirts of modern-day Udaipur, Rajasthan, was a part of the process of metallurgical growth, roots of which go back to the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BCE. An **iron ring** and other iron objects were found here constituting one of the earliest possible iron occurrences in the sub-continent. Balathal in Udaipur district is an important Ahar culture site and it goes back to the late 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BCE. This would make it contemporary with the early Harappan phase at Kot Diji and as early as Ganeshwar-Jodhpur culture of north-east Rajasthan. The discovery of **etched carnelian beads**, a **lapis lazuli bead** and **Rangpur type lustrous redware** in Ahar period suggest a connection with Harappan sites in Gujarat.
2. **Ganeshwar-Jodhpur Culture** was located in the north-eastern part of Rajasthan. There is no direct evidence of copper smelting in Ganeshwar but hundreds of copper object found here suggest that it had emerged as a copper working centre and that its people were supplying these items to communities elsewhere. There are **similarities** between the wheel-made pottery of Ganeshwar and early Harappan pottery. The early Harappans may have obtained their copper from Ganeshwar, probably making it one of the significant suppliers of copper to the mature Harappan culture. Further, **double spiral headed pins** from Ganeshwar have been found at some Harappan sites. All this suggest cultural contact between Ganeshwar and Harappan culture.

**B. Malwa**

In Malwa region, we find a good deal of evidence concerning the sequence of chalcolithic farming beginning with the Kayatha culture followed by the Ahar culture and then the Malwa culture. Radiocarbon dates place the Kayatha culture in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BCE. This culture gets its name from the site of Kayatha in Ujjain district. It was similar in some respect to early Harappan pottery, and there is also a similarity in the steatite microbeads of these two cultures. The axes found at Kayatha have indentation marks similar to those found on Ganeshwar specimen, and there may be a connection with Ganeswar. However, its precise nature is difficult to determine.

**C. The Western Deccan**

The earliest farming culture here, the **Savalda culture** so named after the Tapi Valley site, goes back to 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BCE and its sites are found between the Tapi and Godavari rivers in North Maharashtra. **Kaothe** is a site belonging to the Savalda culture. Dairflabad on the banks of Pravara river (a tributary of Godavari) in Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra also has a Savalda culture phase.

**D. The Middle Ganga Plain and Eastern India**

The eastern Chalcolithic cultures start 1600 B.C. and continue until 800 B.C. Chirand, Rajar Dhibi, Mahisdal, and Bharatpur are important sites that have been excavated. There are several Neolithic chalcolithic sites in the alluvial plains of north Bihar of which five have been excavated: Chirand, Senuar, Chechar, Kutubpur, Maner and Taradih. All these sites had 3<sup>rd</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BCE villages, located on the banks of a stream and show the presence of full-fledged agricultural villages in the Gangetic plains of Bihar.

1. Chirand: In Saran district, situated at the confluence of the Sarayu and Ganga rivers. Neolithic people of Chirand lived in **circular wattle and daubs huts** with rammed floors.
2. Chechar-Kutubpur: located on the bank of Ganga.
3. Senuar: It is on the bank of Kudra river at the foot of Kaimur range, in Rohtas district of Bihar.

There are four periods of occupation from Neolithic to chalcolithic to NBPW to early centuries.

**Economy**

1. The economic base of these cultures was associated with agriculture and cattle rearing. This was supplemented by wild game and fishery as well as attested by archaeological evidence.
2. Excavations at various sites reveal cultivation of a variety of crops. Barley was the main crop besides wheat, rice, gram, pea, bajra, jowar etc.
3. Archaeological evidence from Inamgaon establish the knowledge if the inhabitants about crop rotation, harvesting and irrigation.
4. Certain references of use of ploughshare are also present
5. Excavations have shown that the people domesticated animals like goat, sheep, dog, horse etc. Besides certain references are there about wild animals like various types of deer, buffalo, rhino.
6. Excavations of certain sites have also yielded bones of fish, turtle etc. This shows that people consumed all these.

**Pattern of Settlement**

1. Excavations of various sites suggest that distribution pattern was characterised by regional centres and village settlements. This is suggestive of the existence of some kind of hierarchical system.
2. Excavations also reveal various structures like a fortification, granaries, embankments as are seen at Eran of Malwa culture and at Inamgaon of Jorwe culture.
3. The distinctive house pattern in various sites is rectangular and circular.

4. Walls made-up of mud and thatched roof too being a characteristic feature of the houses in most of the sites.
5. So far as the size of the houses is concerned, it varied from place to place.
6. The house pattern in Ahar culture is marked by the use of mud, use of timber, fairly large size, longer axis being north-south and shorter being east-west, simple furnishing and with chullhas.
7. The Malwa houses at Daimabad, Inamgaon, Navdatoli are large in size having partition wall made up of mud chullhas are common.
8. The Jorwe settlement is characterised by the presence of a large centre in each region. House pattern shows social differentiation with houses of prosperous farmers being larger and in the central part and houses of the artisans situated in western outlying areas. Jorwe houses were large and rectangular in shape characterised by low mud walls.

## Social Structure

1. The regional Chalcolithic cultures are characterised by regional and village settlements as attested by excavations.
2. There was a hierarchical pattern in the social organisation with the prevalence of the concept of social ranking.
3. There was some administrative authority as suggested by the distribution pattern of various sites.
4. Existence of structures such as rampart, granaries, embankment too suggests some kind of administrative authority.

## Various objects

1. Chalcolithic cultures are characterised by the discovery of various copper and terracotta objects.
2. Copper objects comprise arrowheads, spearheads, bangles, rings, beads and flat axes.
3. Daimabad yielded a large copper hoard comprising copper rhinoceros, elephant, two-wheeled chariots, buffalo etc.
4. Terracotta objects comprise human and animals figurines; bull being the most numerous.

## Pottery tradition

1. Pottery was painted and was mostly black on red.
2. The Jorwe pottery is painted black-on-red and special forms, are bowls, jars and globular vases.
3. Ahar pottery shows seven varieties but the most important type being black and redware painted in white.
4. Malwa pottery possesses buff slip, and various patterns are displayed in black or dark brown colour. Small goblets are an important feature of Malwa pottery.
5. Kayatha pottery is marked by three types – Red slipped ware painted in dark brown; red-painted buff ware and a combed ware.
6. Rangpur pottery is known as lustrous redware. It is derived from Harappan red and black ware, black used for painting.

## Religious Beliefs

1. Various findings in excavations throw light on the religious outlook of the people and their religious practices.
2. Excavations rarely give any indication of male gods. Three male figurines of clay discovered from Inamgaon give the same indication of male gods.

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3. Female figures of clay both baked and unbaked have been discovered. A headless female figure from Nevasa and terracotta female figurines from Inamgaon too have been discovered. This suggests that people worshipped mother goddesses.
4. Excavations throw light on various practices of disposal of the dead. Burial was a common custom. Burying of the dead in north-south orientation has been revealed by excavations. There are pieces of evidence of pit-burial also. A typical custom shown by excavations was burying the dead in the house's precincts besides cutting off the feet before the burial too a peculiar outlook of people in Jorwe culture.

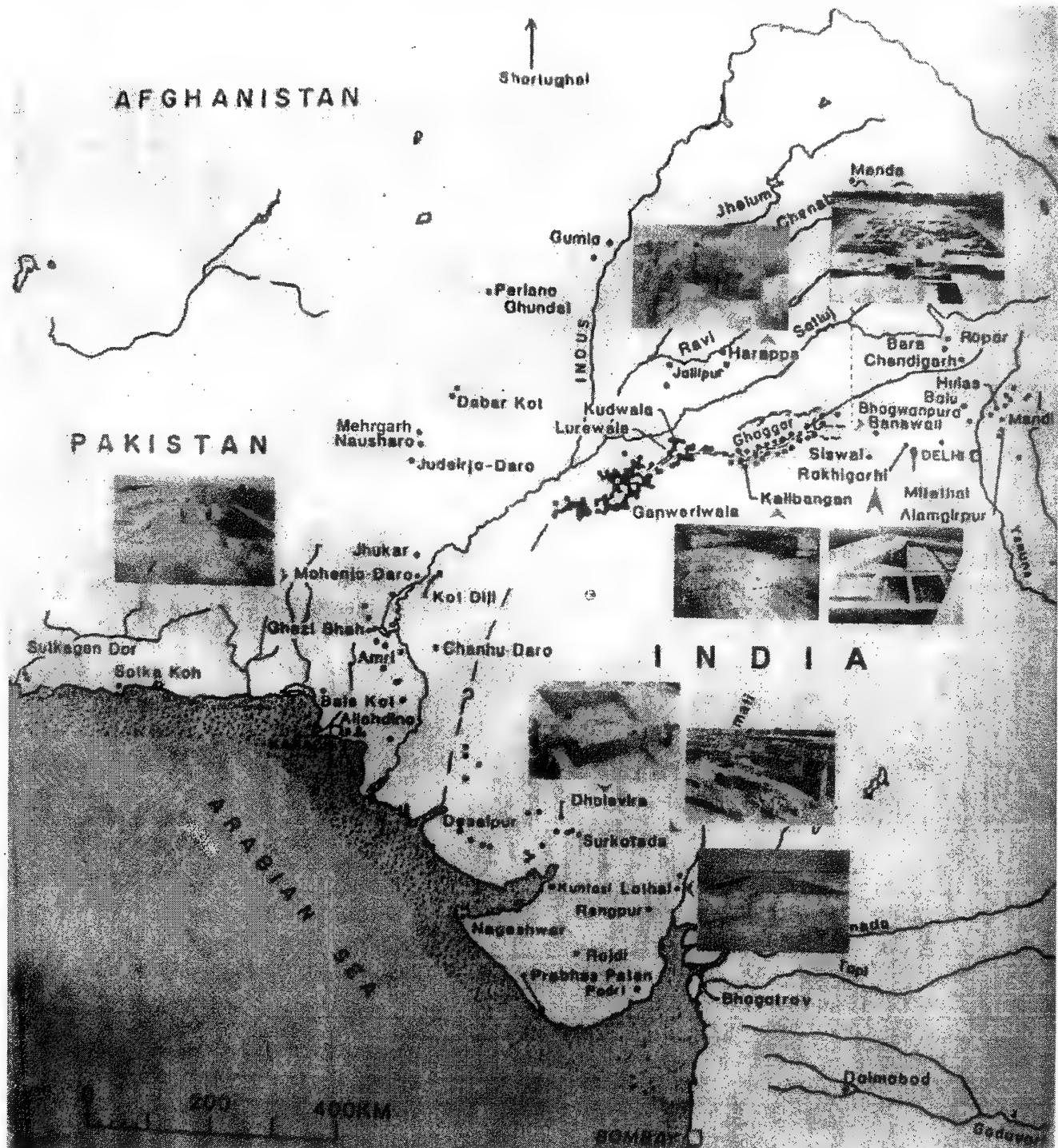
### Megalith Cultures

1. Megaliths usually refer to burials amidst stones in graveyards away from the habitation area. In South India, this kind of elaborate burial came with Iron age starting around 1000 BC and continuing for many centuries subsequently.
2. The material remains of the Iron age are represented by pottery with certain specific features, besides Iron and other metal objects Megalith burials have been reported from Maharashtra around Nagpur, Karnataka in sites like Maski, Andhra Pradesh in sites like Nagarjunakonda, Tamil Nadu in sites like Adichanallur and Kerala.
3. The pottery that we discover from the excavated graves is black and redware.
4. Iron objects have been found universally in all the megalithic sites right from Janapani near Nagpur down to Adichanallur in Tamil Nadu with identical tools that testify to the movement of a fairly tightly knit group of ironworkers.
5. The settlements found near the Megalithic complexes have very thin debris of occupation. This would indicate that these people were living in one area for a short time. Maybe with the knowledge of Iron, they could colonize new areas. Thus, some of the population was nomadic, and some settlements might indicate colonization of the new regions. Where the settlements continue from the preceding period, people continued to live in their old ways. Use of iron tools enabled them to use granite stones for their graves. It is these agro-pastoral groups that enter the historical phase in the early centuries of the Christian era. They have been mentioned in the Sangam literature. Some graves have yielded Roman coins that suggest their entry into history and their participation in trade networks spread over a large area.

INDUS CIVILISATION

Indus Civilisation (2900 BC–1700 BC)

Indus civilisation is one of the four earliest civilisations of the world along with the Mesopotamian



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civilisation along the Tigris and the Euphrates, the Egyptian civilisation along the Nile and the Chinese civilisation along the Hwang Ho. Indus civilisation is the most extensive of all the riverine civilisations encompassing more than 1500 sites over an area of 1.5 million km<sup>2</sup>. The Ghaggar – Hakra river system has the most concentration of settlements. Haryana has the largest number of sites, Daya Ram Sahni excavated the ruins of Harappa in Montgomery district of Punjab. Harappa has been identified with hariuppa mentioned in the Rig Veda. John Marshal promptly called it Harappa civilisation after the first excavated site. In 1922, R.D. Banaerjee excavated Mohenjodaro (mound of the dead) in Larkana district of Sind. The northern-most site of the Indus civilisation is Manda in Jammu and Kashmir. The southern most point is Daimabad on the banks of Pravara river in Maharashtra. Alamgirpur in Uttar Pradesh is the eastern-most site while the western-most site is Sutkangedor on the banks of Dasht river in Baluchistan.

The Indus civilisation belongs to the Bronze Age; it is older but surprisingly more developed than the Chalcolithic cultures in the subcontinent. All settlements are found in different phases:

1. Early Harappa phase - 2900 -2500 BC
2. Middle Harappa phase - 2500 – 2000 BC  
(Mature Harappa Phase)
3. Late Harappa Phase - 2000 – 1700 BC

(Most of the sites are in later harappa phase)

Sl. No.	City	Province	River bank
1	Harappa	Pakistani Punjab	River Ravi
2	Mohenjodaro	Sind	River Indus
3	Ropar	Indian Punjab	River Sutlej
4	Lothal	Gujarat	River Bhogava
5	Kalibangan	Rajasthan	River Ghaggar
6	Chanhudaro	Sind	River Indus
7	Alamgirpur	Uttar Pradesh	River Hindón
8	Sutkangedor	Baluchistan	River Dasht
9	Banwali	Haryana	River Ghaggar
10	Manda	Jammu & Kashmir	River Chenab
11	Daimabad	Maharashtra	River Pravara
12	Kotdiji	Sind	River Indus
13	Rangpur	Gujarat	River Bhadur
14	Alladinho	Sind	River Indus

### Town Planning

1. Town planning was not uniform but some common features can be highlighted. There was systematic town planning on the lines of the grid-system, i.e. streets and lanes cutting across one another almost at right angles, thus dividing the city into several rectangular blocks.

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2. There was an impressive fortified citadel on the western side which housed public buildings. Below the citadel on the eastern side is the lower town consisting of the houses of the commoners. Houses generally had side entrances and there were no windows even facing the main streets.
3. There was large-scale use of standardized burnt-bricks and the total absence of the stone building.
4. There was a remarkable underground drainage system connecting all houses to the street drains which were covered with either bricks or stone slabs and equipped with manhole.

### Economy

1. Agricultural technology was well developed. Main crops that were cultivated were wheat, barley. We have evidence of cultivation of rice in Lothal and Rangpur only. Other crops included dates, mustard, sesamum, leguminous plants and cotton. Indus people were the first to produce cotton in the world. We have evidence of mixed cropping from Kalibangan. The main crops wheat and barley were cultivated as rabi (winter) crops, other crops cultivated as Kharif crops (summer). Fields were not ploughed but dug up with a light toothed instrument. Indigo was evident from Rojdi in Gujarat. Well irrigation was known to the people of Alladinho in Sind. Traces of dams have been found from Dholavira in Gujarat along with evidence of irrigation canals.
2. Along with agriculture, animal rearing was also practiced. They reared buffaloes, camels, oxens, sheep, asses, goats, pigs, elephants, dogs, cats etc. The remains of horses have been found at Surkotada in Gujarat.
3. There existed specialised groups of artisans such as goldsmiths, silversmiths, bronze-smiths, brick-makers, stone-cultures, seal-culture, weavers, boat-builders, terracotta manufacturers, ivory-workers etc. Harappans were the first to use silver in the world.
4. (a) Agriculture and industry provided the basis for trade. Forest produce also supplemented them. Internal trade developed first among various areas like Rajasthan, Saurashtra, South India, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra.  
(b) Foreign trade with Mesopotamia or Sumeria (Iraq), Central Asia, Persia, Afghanistan, Bahrain.  
(c) Main exports were several agricultural products and a variety of finished products like cotton goods, pottery, ivory products etc. Teak was obtained from Gujarat, Amazonite from Hirapuri in Gujarat, Slate from Kangra and Rajasthan, Fuschite from North Karnataka, Conch from Saurashtra, Deccan, Amethyst from Maharashtra, Lead from Kashmir and South India, Tin, Jade and Copper from Baluchistan.  
(d) Main imports consisted of Jade from Central Asia, Turquoise from Persia, Lapis Lazuli from Badakshan in Afghanistan, Gold and silver from Afghanistan, Tin from Afghanistan.  
(e) For transportation bullock carts, pack animals and boats were used. Trade was based on the exchange of goods without the use of money. Coins are not evident. Foreign trade was mostly in luxury items.  
(f) There are literary as well as archaeological evidence of trade links between the Sumerian and Indus people. The Sumerian texts refer to trade relations with 'Meluha' which was the ancient name given to the Indus region, and they also speak of two intermediate stations called Dilmun (Bahrain) and Makan (Makran coast). Discovery of many Indus seals and goods in Mesopotamia and of Mesopotamian seals and goods in Indus cities shows evidence of contact.  
(g) Harappans had trade relations with Shortughai and Mundigak in Afghanistan, Altyn Depe and Namazga in Turkmenistan and Tepe Yahya and Shahr-i-Shakta in Iran. Indigo was exported to Egypt from Rajdi.

### Seals

1. Harappan seals are made of Steatite (Soft Stone)

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2. Size varies from  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch to 2-1/2 inches. The two main shapes are the square type with a carved animal and inscription on it, and the rectangular type with an inscription only.
3. The animal most frequently encountered on the seals is a humpless bull.
4. The purpose of seals was probably to mark ownership of property, hence every important citizen must have possessed one.
5. The Harappan seals are the greatest artistic creations of the Harappans.
6. Three cylindrical seals from Mesopotamia have been found from Mohenjodaro, one cylindrical seal from Kalibangan, one circular button shaped seal called the Persian gulf seal has been found from Lothal.
7. 33 Harappan seals are found in various foreign places such as Susa, Ur, Kish, lagaas and Asmar.

### Script and Language

1. Harappan script is regarded as pictographic since its signs represent birds, fish, varieties of human form etc.
2. The number of signs of the Harappan script is known to be between 400 and 600 of which about 40 or 60 are basic and the rest are their variants.
3. The language of the Harappans is at present unknown and must remain so until the Harappan script is read.
4. Fish symbol is most represented in the pictographs.
5. Most of the pictographs appear on seals.
6. A signboard inscription bearing 10 pictographs has been found from Dholavira in Gujarat.

### Polity

1. There is no clear-cut evidence about the name of the polity.
2. According to D.D. Kosambi, the priests constituted the ruling class.
3. According to R.S. Sharma, the merchants were the ruling class.
4. Harappans had very efficient and well organised administrative machinery.

### Religion

1. The chief female deity was Mother Goddess (Goddess of Earth), represented in terracotta figurines.
2. The chief male deity was the Pasupati Mahadeva (proto-Siva), represented in seals as sitting in a yogic posture on a low throne, and having three faces and two horns. He is surrounded by four animals (elephant, tiger, rhino and buffalo, each facing a different direction), and two deer appear at his feet.
3. There is sufficient evidence for the prevalence of Phallic (lingam) worship which came to be closely associated with Siva in later times.
4. Numerous stone symbols of female sex organs (yoni worship), have been discovered.
5. Indus people also worshipped gods in the form of trees like Pipal and animals like Pigeon and humpless bull.
6. Indus people believed in ghosts and evil forces and used amulets as protection against them.

### Terracotta Figurines

1. Terracotta figurines were made of baked clay. Majority of them are hand-modelled.
2. Both male and female figurines are found, the later being more common.

3. Also terracotta figurines of a range of birds and animals, including monkeys, dogs, sheep and cattle are seen. Both humped and humpless bulls are found; the pride of place seemingly going to the great humpless bulls.

## Images

1. Images of both metal and stone have been discovered.
2. The best metal specimen is that of a bronze image of a nude woman dancer at Mohenjodaro.
3. The best stone specimen is a steatite image of a bearded man at Mohenjodaro.
4. Stone sculptures have also been found from Harappa, Dabarkot and Mundigak.

## Pottery

1. The Indus people indulged in widespread use of potter's wheel.
2. Pots were painted in various colours and decorated with human figures, plants, animals and geometrical patterns.
3. Harappan glazed pottery was the first of its kind in the world.
4. Both plain and painted pottery were present, but the plain pottery is more common than the painted ware. The plain pottery is red in colour whereas painted pottery is of red and black colour.

## Weights and Measures

1. Harappans used weights and measures for commercial as well as building purposes. Numerous articles used as weights have been discovered. The weight proceeded in a series, first doubling from 1,2,4,8 to 64 etc. and then in decimal multiples of 16.
2. Several sticks inscribed with measure marks have been discovered. Harappans were the authors of a linear system of measurement with a unit equal to one angula of the Arthashastra which was used in India till recently. The measure of length was based upon a foot of 37.6 cm and a cubit of 51.8 to 53.6.

## Burial Practices

1. Cemeteries are generally located around the perimeter of the settlements.
2. Three forms of burials are found at Mohenjodaro, viz. complete burials, fractional burials (burial of some bones after exposure to wild beasts and birds) and post-cremation burials.
3. The general practice was extended inhumation, the body lying on its back, with the head generally to the north.
4. A number of graves took the form of brick chambers or cists as in the case of those found at Kalibangan.
5. At Harappa, traces of a wooden coffin and bodies covered by a reed-shroud were found.
6. From Surkotada comes the evidence of the practice of pot-burial.
7. From Lothal cemetery comes evidence of double burial with several examples of pairs of skeletons, one male and one female in each case, buried in a single grave.
8. In Harappa, cemetery it is present in which graves are not situated in the usual North-West axis but are situated on East-West axis.

## Theory of Decline

1. Theory of Aryan invasion talks about the reference to the destruction of forts by Aryans in the Rig Veda. The discovery of human skeletons huddled together at Mohenjodaro might indicate invasion by foreigners. There is also evidence of further strengthening of defences at Harappa.

2. Natural calamites such as recurring floods leading to decline of Mohenjodaro and Chanhudaro, drying of rivers leading to decline of Kalibangan and Banwali, decreasing fertility; deforestation; occasional earthquakes have also been suggested.
3. Suicidal weaknesses of the Harappans due to lack of flexibility of mind, ignoring of defences have also been suggested.
4. The decline of oceanic trade with the Sumerians must have contributed partly to the decline of Indus civilisation.
5. Outbreak of certain epidemics such as Malaria might also have been responsible for the decline.

Thus, the Indus civilisation did not come to a sudden dead end, but faded away gradually.

## Special Features of Some Harappan Sites

### 1. Harappa

- (a) It was the first Indus site to be discovered by Daya Ram Sahni in 1921.
- (b) It is located on the banks of river Ravi.
- (c) There are two rows of six granaries, these were the nearest buildings to the river.
- (d) Barracks in the form of rows of single roomed habitations which housed labourers are seen.
- (e) Largest number of wheat grains are seen from Harappa.
- (f) Red sandstone torso of nude male seen.
- (g) Two types of burial practices one of typical R37 type and another of atypical cemetery H type seen.

### 2. Mohenjodaro

- (a) It was the second Indus site to be discovered by R.D. Banerjee in 1922.
- (b) It is located on the banks of river Indus in Sind.
- (c) Great granary – the largest building.
- (d) Multi-pillared assembly hall and a big rectangular building.
- (e) Another building, identified as the temple.
- (f) First street located in Mohenjodaro.
- (g) Pasupati seal from Mohenjodaro.
- (h) Bronze image of a dancing girl with right hand on hip.
- (i) Steatite image of a bearded man said to be of a priest.
- (j) 3 cylindrical seals of Mesopotamia.
- (k) Bronze mirror, bronze needle, bronze saw seen in Mohenjodaro.
- (l) Great bath from Mohenjodaro has the largest brickwork.
- (m) Skeletons are found on the stairs of a well indicating warfare and probably suggests Aryan invasion.
- (n) Outbreak of Malaria.
- (o) Settlement said to have declined due to floods.
- (p) Mohenjodaro literally means 'mound of the dead'.

### 3. Lothal

- (a) Lothal in Gujarat was excavated by S.R.Rao.
- (b) Lothal is located on the banks of river Bhagava in Gujarat.
- (c) The only Indus site with an artificial dockyard. The world's first tidal port at Lothal.
- (d) Evidence of double burials from Lothal.
- (e) Evidence of Cultivation of rice in Lothal and Rangpur.
- (f) Bead makers shop seen in Lothal, Chanhudaro.
- (g) Lothal is known as Manchester of Harappan civilisation for its cotton trade.
- (h) Copper furnaces have been found.
- (i) A circular button shaped seal called Persian gulf seal seen.
- (j) Two terracotta models of Egyptian mummies found wrapped in muslin cloth.
- (k) A sacrificial fire alter found both in Lothal and Kalibangan suggesting medical and surgical skills.
- (l) The game of chess seemed to have been played at Lothal.

### 4. Chanhudaro

- (a) Chanhudaro was excavated by N. G. Majumdar in Sind.
- (b) It is known as the Lancashire of India.
- (c) It's the only Indus city without a citadel.
- (d) Like Mohenjodaro it was also flooded more than once.
- (e) Discovery of a small pot with was probably an ink-well.
- (f) Largest number of copper implements are found from chanhudaro.

### 5. Kalibangan

- (a) The word Kalibangan literally means black bangles.
- (b) It was excavated by B.B. Lal and K. Ghosh.
- (c) It is situated on the banks of Ghaggar river in Rajasthan.
- (d) One of the two Indus cities which have both proto-Harappan and Harappan cultural phases.
- (e) Evidence of the earliest ploughed field in India in its proto-Harappan phase.
- (f) Discovery of platforms with five altars.
- (g) Conspicuous absence of Mother Goddess figurines.
- (h) Mud bricks were used in the largest number in Kalibangan.
- (i) Wells are found from every house in Kalibangan.
- (j) 6-patterns of pottery type are found from Kalibangan.
- (k) Evidence of mixed cropping from Kalibangan.
- (l) A cylindrical seal has been found from Kalibangan.

### 6. Surkotada

- (a) It was excavated by Joshi and is located in Gujarat.
- (b) There is evidence of bones of a horse.

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(c) The only Indus city to have a stone wall as fortification.

(d) Evidence of Pot burial in Surkotada.

### 7. Dholavira

(a) Dholavira in Gujarat was excavated by R. S. Bisht.

(b) Dholavira is the largest of all the Indus settlement.

(c) A middle town is seen only in Dholavira.

(d) Stone has been used in constructions.

(e) A 10-alphabet signboard indicating direction has been seen.

(f) A megalith burial has been seen from Dholavira.

(g) Evidences of irrigation, dams and embankments.

(h) Dholavira is the warehousing settlement of Harappan civilisation.

(i) Well prepared gold rings have been seen in Dholavira, Mandi and Daimabad.

(j) Dholavira being located on a faultline might have been destroyed by an earthquake.

### 8. Banwali

(a) Is located in Hisar district of Haryana on Ghaggar river.

(b) Evidence of largest number of barley grains.

(c) Oval shaped settlement. Banwali is the only Harappan city with Radial streets.

### 9. Daimbad

(a) Excavated by Dhavalikar.

(b) Located on the banks of Pravara river in Maharashtra.

(c) Largest number of bronze items.

(d) A Bronze chariot, rhino, elephant, bull seen.

### 10. Kot Diji

(a) Located in Sind. Located on the banks of river Indus.

(b) Excavated by Ghurey.

(c) Kot diji has been destroyed by fire.

(d) Largest number of stone implements are found from kot diji.

(e) Stone arrow heads have been seen from kot diji.

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## CHAPTER - 4

### VEDIC PERIOD

The Indus civilisation declined around 1700 BC due to a variety of causes. The advent of the Aryans in India around 1500 BC marked the beginning of the Rig Vedic (Early Vedic Period) from 1500 – 1000 BC followed by the Later Vedic Period from 1000 – 600 BC.

**Original Home and Identity:** The word 'Aryan' literally means 'of high birth', but generally the word 'Aryan' is used to refer to people who spoke the Indo-Aryan language. The question of original home of the Aryans is perhaps the most controversial topic of ancient Indian history and a variety of opinions have been put forward by different scholars. Though consensus eludes the scholars, most of the scholars agree with the theory put forward by the Max Muller that Aryans came to India from Central Asia.

Most scholars agree that the culture of the Aryans was more or less of the same type. Originally they lived somewhere in the steppes stretching from Southern Russia to Central Asia and spoke the Indo-European languages which are currently spoken in changed forms all over Europe, Iran and the greater part of the Indian subcontinent. As a result, several words of common usage show the striking similarities between Sanskrit and some of the principal languages of Europe. The earliest life of the Aryans seems to have been mainly pastoral; agriculture being a secondary occupation. Their society was male dominated. They seem to have domesticated various animals the most important of which was the horse. The domesticated horse appears in the sixth millennium B.C in the Black Sea and the Ural mountain area. The swiftness of the horse enabled the people to move in different directions from about 2000 B.C. onwards either from pressure of population, shifting of course of rivers or from desiccation of pasture lands. The tall, comparatively fair, and mostly long-headed Aryans harnessed the horses to light chariots with spoked wheels and migrated in bands westwards, southwards and eastwards. They brought with them their patrilineal family system, their worship of sky gods and their horses and chariots. Some invaded Europe, to become the ancestors of the Greeks, Latin's, Celts and Gauls. Other appeared in Anatolia called the Hittites; the Kassites conquered Babylon and a north-east Syria a people called Mittani, whose kings had Indo-Iranian names is attested to by inscriptions. The Boghaz Kui inscriptions dated to 1400 BC gives the copy of a peace treaty between the Hittites and the Maryanni rulers of the Mittani, in which the names of the Vedic gods - Indra, Mitra, Nasatya and Varuna are mentioned. Yet other groups of Aryans speaking Indo-Iranian language moved to the border between India and Iran where one group migrated to India speaking Indo-Aryan and another group migrated to Iran. So, the language of Zend Avesta (old Persian) is very similar to the Rig Vedic Sanskrit. In fact, the Vedic culture has close affinities with the ancient Aryan culture of Iran as both of them seem to have derived from one and the same Indo-Iranian culture. The migrants to India called themselves Aryans, a word generally anglicized with Aryans. The name was also used by the ancient Persians, and survives in the word Iran. The Persian Achaemenid emperor Darius I called himself as Aryan in the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.

A little earlier than 1500 B.C., the Aryans appeared in India. We have archaeological traces of their advent. Possibly they used socketed axes, bronze dirks and swords, which have been discovered in North-western India. Archaeological evidence of the horse and cremation appears in Swat Valley in Pakistan. The earliest Indo-Aryan lived in the geographical area covered by eastern Afghanistan, North-West Frontier Province, Punjab. Since Afghanistan was occupied by the Indo-Aryans and the Iranian Aryans for some time, a part of this country came to be known as Araiya or Haraiya. It is important to understand that the Aryan invasion of India theory has been rendered obsolete for want of archaeological evidence and has been replaced by the theory of Aryan migration to India occurring in several waves over several centuries, the earliest wave of which is represented by the Rig Vedic people who appeared in the sub-continent in about 1500 B.C.

## Geography of the Vedic Age

**Early Vedic Period:** The Rig Veda is the only source which gives us an idea of the geography of the Early Vedic Period. The Aryans in the early Vedic age had knowledge of the Indus valley which was called Saptasindavah or the land of the seven rivers. Indus (Sindhu) is the most mentioned river in the Rig Veda. Indus had various tributaries joining it from the west such as Suvasthu (Swat), Kubha (Kabul), Krumu (Kurram) and Gomati (Gomal). Indus also had various tributaries joining it from the east such as Sutudri (Sutlej), Vipasa (Beas), Parushini (Ravi), Asikni (Chenab) and Vitase (Jhelum). Saraswati is considered as the holiest river in the age of the Rig Veda as many hymns were composed on its banks. Saraswati is referred to as 'Naditarna' or the best of the rivers in the Rig Veda. Saraswati is identified with the Ghaggar-Hakra Channel in Haryana and Rajasthan. But its Rig Vedic description shows it to be the Avestan river Haraxwati (Helmand river) in south Afghanistan from where the name Saraswati was transferred to India. Yamuna is mentioned thrice and Ganga is mentioned only once. Though Rig Veda mentions the term 'Samudra' it probably meant only a collection of water and not sea. So, we have no reference to the sea in the Rig Veda. Rig Vedic people had knowledge of Himvant or the snow mountains. They also had knowledge of Majuvant from which Aryans got Soma, an intoxicating drink. Soma was the drink of Gods. So, the Rig Vedic Aryans had knowledge of eastern Afghanistan, North West Frontier Provinces and the Punjab (Punjab then included east Punjab, west Punjab as also Haryana).

**Later Vedic Period:** In this period, the Aryans moved into the eastern areas as is evident from the story of Videga Madhava in Satapatha Brahmana according to which Videga Madhava started from river Saraswati with fire god Agni and with his help moved eastwards till he reached river Gandak (Sadanira). He then crossed the eastern bank of river Gandak leading to the naming of the area as 'Videha', apparently named after its first Aryan Coloniser. So, the Aryans with the help of fire and iron tools expanded into Western Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and upto the borders of Bengal. In this process of expansion the 'Janas' (Units of tribal people) of the early Vedic age were transformed into 'Janapadas' (territory under units of tribal people) of the later Vedic age. The Aryans in the later Vedic age also acquired knowledge of the eastern sea and the western sea. They also had knowledge of Narmada river and the Vindhyan mountains. The Aitreya Brahmana, a text of the later Vedic age divides the country into five parts – north, east, west, south and the Central parts.

## Political Structure

**Early Vedic Period:** The Aryans were engaged in two types of conflicts-first, they fought with the pre-Aryans, and secondly, they fought amongst themselves. The Rig Vedic people came into conflict with the indigenous inhabitants called the dasas, dasyus etc. Since the dasas also appear in the ancient Iranian literature, they seem to have been a branch of the early Aryans. The Rig Veda mentions the defeat of Sambara by a chief called Divodasa, who belonged to the Bharata clan. In this case the term das appears in the name Divodasa. Possibly the dasyus in the Rigveda represent the original inhabitants of the country, and an Aryan chief who overpowered them was called Trasadasyu. The Aryan chief was soft towards the dasa, but strongly hostile to the dasyus. The term dasyuhatya, phallus and did not keep cattle for dairy products. In the Rig Veda, Indra is called Purandhara which means that he was the breaker of forts. But the so called forts have not been identified.

The Dasarajna or the battle of the ten kings is an important historical event which took place on the banks of Parushni (Ravi) river. In this battle, Sudas, the son of Divodas and the Bharata king of Tritsu family fought with and won over an alliance of ten tribes of which five were Aryan and another five were non-Aryan. In this battle, Purukutsa, the leader of the ten tribes was killed. This battle broke out because of a dispute between Vasishta, the priest of the Bharatas and Visvamitra, the priest who supported the ten tribes. Another issue which sparked off the conflict was the division of the waters of the Parushni. Another important battle took place on the banks of the Yamuna where Sudas defeated a confederacy of three non-Aryan tribes led by king Bheda.

The tribal chief called as 'Rajan' was the centre of the administrative machinery of the Aryans in the Rig Vedic period. The king's position was hereditary and the king was called as 'Gopajanasya' i.e. the protector of the tribe and its cattle and not the ruler of any specific territory. The king was assisted by a purohit, a senani and a gramani. In the beginning the gramani was just the head of a small tribal fighting unit. But when the unit settled, the gramani became the head of the village and in course of time he became identical with the Vrajapati (authority over pasture land). The king also employed spies to keep an eye on unsocial activates. So there was not definite bureaucratic setup. The king did not maintain any regular or standing army but in times of war he mustered a militia whose military functions were performed by different tribal groups called Vrata, gana, grama, sardha. Several tribal assemblies called Vidhatha, Sabha, Samiti and gana are mentioned in the Rig Veda. Vidhatha seems to be the oldest parent folk assembly from which Sabha and Samiti differentiated. These assemblies exercised various deliberative, military and religious functions. Even women attended the Sabha and vidhatha in Rig Vedic times. But the two most important assemblies were the Sabha and the samiti and the kings showed eagerness to win their support. There was no doctrine of divinity associated with kingship, only one King Purukutsa has been described as ardhadeva (semi-divine) in the Rig Veda.

**Later Vedic Period:** Aryans expanded from Punjab over the whole of western Uttar Pradesh covered by the Ganga-Yamuna doab. In the process of expansion, the 'janas' were transformed into 'janapadas' which were the first territorial kingdoms mentioned in the later Vedic age. The Bharatas and Purus, the two major tribes, combined and thus formed the Kuru janapada. The Kurus settled down in the upper Ganga-Yamuna doab with two capital at Hastinapur on the banks of Ganga and Indraprastha on the banks of the Yamuna. The land of the Kurus was called as Kurukshetra which was place where the Mahabharata was took place between the Kauravas and the Pandavas both of whom belonged to the Kuru clan. As a result practically the whole of the Kuru clan was wiped out. Form tradition we learn that when Hastinapur was flooded, the remnants of Kuru clan moved to Kaushambi near Allahabad. Panchala janapada was formed to the east of Kuru janapada. Covering the districts of Bareilly, Badaun and Farukhabad in Uttar Pradesh. The Panchala janapada had a northern capital at Ahicchatra and a southern capital at Kampilya. Koshala janapada was formed to the east of Panchala in eastern Uttar Pradesh with capitals at Ayodhya (Saket) and Sravasti. Videha janapada was formed in northern Bihar. Other important janapadas were Kasi, Magadha, Anga, Surasena, Matsya, Kekeya and Madra.

With the formation of bigger kingdoms, the king became more powerful. His authority acquired territorial connotation. The term 'Rashtra' which indicates territory, first appears in this period. The popular assemblies lost power and importance. The Vidhata completely disappeared. The Sabha and Samiti were waging a losing battle for power with the king. Women were no longer permitted to sit on the Sabha, and it was now dominated by nobles and brahmanas. Traces of election of king appear in later Vedic texts. The king received voluntary presents called 'bali' from the common people called Vis. Kingship was usually hereditary though not always so. The king influence was strengthened by rituals like the rajasuya sacrifice, which was supposed to confer supreme power on him. He performed the ashvamedha sacrifice, which meant unquestioned control over an area in which the royal horse ran uninterrupted. He also performed the Vajapeya or the Chariot race, in which the royal chariot was made to win the race against his kinsmen. All these rituals added to the power and prestige of the king. Also the collection of taxes and tributes deposited with an officer called Sangrihiti provided the king with a source of revenue. The king was assisted in central administration by an increasing number of officials but a structured bureaucracy did not yet come into being. At the lower level, the administration was possibly carried on by village assemblies, which may have been controlled by the chiefs of the dominant clans. These assemblies also tried local cases. But even in later Vedic times the king did not possess a standing army. Tribal units continued to be mustered in times of war. The political system was growing in complexity and the Aitreya Brahmana gives references to five types of state systems such as Rajya, Bhojya, Swarajya, Vairajya and Samrajya. Rajya was ruled by Raj, Bhojya by Bhoj, Swarajya by Swarat, Vairajya by Virat and Samrajya by Samrat.

**Early Vedic Period:** The people in the early Vedic age were predominantly pastoral, though agriculture was also practiced. Various animals as cow, sheep, goat, camel, bull horse were reared of which the most important was the cow. The men prosperous with many cattle was called Gomath. Wealth was computed in the form of cow. Cattle were also given as gifts or dakshina to the priests. Land does not figure as an item of donation and postures were more important. The terms for war in the Rig Veda is gavishti or the search for cows. Most of the wars were fought for the sake of cows. People also fought for possession of good grazing grounds. Prayers were made for increase in the cattle wealth. Panis were non-aryans involved in barter (pan). They were much criticised in the Rig Veda for stealing cows and thereby amassing huge cattle wealth. In the early Vedic period, agriculture was secondary to pastoralism. The cultivated field was known as kshetra and, ploughing was known as Krishi. The plough was known as Langla or Sira. Ploughshare was known as Phala. Furrows were known as Sita though later on Sita came to signify wealth produced in land. Rig Veda also provides references of ploughed fields, stone pulley wheels and irrigation channels. The Rig Veda mentions only one food grain called 'Yava' which in later times had the specific sense of barley but in Rigveda it is the common name for any food grain. Cotton, Rice, Wheat are nowhere mentioned in the Rigveda.

'Ajas' is the common metal having the colour of Sun or fire and is used to refer to copper or bronze. It does not indicate Iron. Hiranya or gold is mentioned as obtained from river sands. The spoked wheel mentioned in the Rig Veda is a new development. The smelting of metals was known and metal smelters were called 'Karmar'. Rig Veda mentions 'grama' which is a fighting unit on the move and not a village. The Rig Veda does not mention of any 'Nagar'. Hariyuppa is mentioned as a Pur (fort), it's identified with Harappa. The Rig Vedic Aryans used copper hordes and their predominant pottery type is Ochre Coloured Pottery (OCP) though Black and Red ware type of pottery was also known to them.

Rig Vedic economy was a pre-state economy in which taxation system was not developed and 'bali' was a form of voluntary contribution given by the producers to the king. It was not a usual form of tax. Whatever the king acquired by way of contributions was redistributed among his subjects as a result of which there were no big differences in wealth among the various sections of the Society.

**Later Vedic Period:** The later Vedic age saw the expansion of people into the eastern areas using fire and iron. Iron objects have been found in north India in the bracket of 1000 – 700 BC. Iron was initially used for weapons and later on for agriculture. The Aryans while moving eastwards integrated the technological knowledge of the indigenous people as a result many non-aryan words entered the Vedic literature and agriculture also became advanced. Various crops are mentioned in the literature of the later Vedic age including rice, wheat, sugarcane, lentil, barley, millet, mustard etc. Various crop protection mantras are also mentioned. Atharva contains many references to agriculture. Surplus was produced in agriculture in the later Vedic age. Wheat, barley and rice have been found from later Vedic strata. Rice is mentioned as 'Vrihi' and wheat as 'godhuma' and barley as 'yava'. Sugarcane is mentioned as 'Ikshu'. We still do not have references to land donation though land became more important. Cattle rearing continued to be practiced though agriculture was the predominant economic activity. The people in the later Vedic age are associated with Painted Grey Ware (PGW) alongwith use of Iron, wattle and doab houses, rice and horses. Iron in the later Vedic age is mentioned as 'Krishnayayes' or the black metal. Lots of improvement was made in the arts and Crafts. Besides the copper and bronze workers, there appeared iron smiths and chariot makers. Shipping was known to people in the later Vedic age. We have reference to the trading activities and use of coins, though coins were nowhere excavated from later Vedic age strata. Coins were first found archaeologically only in the pre-Mauryan period.

The increasing resources of the later Vedic age were pooled by the king. Bali became a customary contribution, bhaga was a share of the produce (1/6<sup>th</sup> to 1/2) while shulka was an additional tax. It appears that bhaga was the oldest tax levied on people by the kings. But bali, bhaga and shulka were still not full fledged taxes. The Vaishyas or Vis community was the chief tax payers. The resources were unequally distributed by the king for the benefit of the brahmanas and kshatriyas at the expense of the

Vaishyas and Sudras. This led to increasing inequalities in the distribution of wealth. There was increasing complexity of the Social and political organisation which added a new dimension to the economic development.

## Vedic Society

**Early Vedic Period:** Kinship was the basis of social structure, and a man was identified with the clan to which he belonged. Rigveda society is basically a tribal society. The Rig Veda shows some consciousness of the physical appearance of people in the north-western part of India in about 1500 – 1000 B.C. Varna as used in the Rig Veda means colour. The Rig Veda speaks about Arya varna (Aryans) and dasa varna (non-aryans), where possibly the distinction was on the basis of colour.

The Arya varna consisted of the Aryans whose tribes were called 'Janas'. The term 'Janapada' or territory is not used even once in the Rig Veda since the territory or kingdom was not yet established. The jana was divided into group of people called 'Vis'. The Vis was divided into grama or smaller tribal units meant for fighting. When the gramas clashed with one another it caused Sangrama or war. Gramas were divided into Kulas (family) the head of which was called Kulapa. The tribal society of the Rig Vedic period is broadly divided into three groups – priests, warriors and the people. The fourth division called the Shudras appeared towards the end of the Rig Vedic period, because the term Shudra is mentioned for the first time in the tenth book of the Rig Veda, which is the latest addition. In the age of the Rig Veda differentiation based on occupations had started, but this division was not very sharp. The most numerous varna of Vaishya arose out of the Vis or the mass of the tribal people. Towards the end of the early Vedic period, the exploitation of vis led to creation of social inequalities, and this helped the rise of princes and priests at the cost of the common tribal people. But the society was till tribal and largely egalitarian.

The non-Aryan consisted of dasas, dasyus and panis. The dasas conquered by the Aryans were gradually transformed into Sudras. Dasas were called as Avrata (not obeying the ordinances of gods), akratu (not following sacrifices), anasah (snub nosed), midravach (indistinct speech) and Krishnatvach (dark skinned). There was active hostility towards the dasyus and it was more distinct than towards the dasa. Panis were the trading community with lot of cattle wealth and were despised by the Aryans.

We repeatedly hear of slaves who were given as gifts to the priests. They were mainly women slaves employed for domestic purposes. It is clear that in Rig Vedic times slaves were not used directly in agriculture or other productive activities. Untouchability is unknown in the Rig Vedic period.

The concept of 'Gotra' did not arise in the Rig Vedic period. So people in the Rig Vedic period married irrespective of the concept of Gotra.

**Later Vedic Period:** The later Vedic society came to be divided into four Varnas called the brahmanas, rajanyas or kshatriyas, vaishyas and shudras. The growing cult of sacrifices enormously added to the power of the brahmanas. In the beginning the brahmanas were only one of the sixteen classes of priests, but they gradually overshadowed the other priestly groups and emerged as the most important class. Sometimes the brahmanas come into conflict with the rajanyas, who represented the order of the warrior-nobles, for positions of supremacy. But when the two upper orders had to deal with the lower orders they made up their differences. From the end of the later Vedic period on it began to be emphasised that the two should cooperate to rule over the rest of the society. The Vaishyas constituted the common people and were involved in producing functions such as agriculture, cattle-breeding etc. Some of them also worked as artisans. However, towards the end of the later Vedic age, the name Vaishya began to be equated with the trading class. The Vaishyas appear to be the only tribute-payers in later Vedic times, and the brahmanas and Kshatriyas are represented as living on the tributes collected from the Vaishyas. All the three higher varnas shared one common feature: they were entitled to upanayana or investiture with the sacred thread according to the Vedic mantras. The fourth varna was deprived of the sacred thread ceremony and the recitation of the gayatri mantra and with this began the imposition of disabilities on the sudras. Nevertheless, there were several public rituals connected with the coronation of the king in which the Sudras participated. Certain sections of artisans such as

rathakara or chariot-maker enjoyed a high status, and were entitled to the sacred thread ceremony. Therefore, even in later Vedic times varna distinctions had not advanced very far.

The institution of gotra appeared in later Vedic times. Literally it means the cow-pen or the place where cattle belonging to the whole clan are kept, but in course of time it signified descent from a common ancestor. People began to practice gotra exogamy. No marriage could take place between persons belonging to the same gotra are having the same lineage.

Ashramas or four stages of life were not well established in Vedic times. In the post-vedic texts we hear of four ashramas – that of Brahmachari or Student, Grihasta or Householder, vanaprastha or hermit and Sanyasin or ascetic who completely renounced the worldly life. Only the first three are mentioned in the later Vedic texts; the last or the fourth stage had not been well established in later Vedic times though ascetic life was not unknown. Even in post-vedic times only the stage of the householder was commonly practised by all the varnas.

## Position of Women in the Vedic Period

**Early Vedic Period:** Rig Vedic society was a patriarchal and patrilineal society with patrilocal norms. The birth of daughters was not desired, but once they were born, they were treated with kindness and consideration. Their education was not neglected and some of them even composed hymns and rose to the rank of seers. Girls were married long after they reached puberty. There seems to have been considerable freedom in the selection of a husband. Monogamy was the rule though polygamy was permitted. Polyandry was also evident as is seen in maruts marriage with Rodasi. The practise of Niyoga existed. Niyoga was a variant of widow remarriage in which a young childless widow was temporarily married with the husband's brother for the purpose of producing children. There was no stigma attached to Niyoga. Women had a position of honour in the household. The wife participated in the religious offerings of the husband. There is no evidence of seclusion of women as is seen by women's participation in Vidhatha and Sabha.

**Later Vedic Period:** The status of women declined in the later Vedic period relative to the early Vedic period. There was an attempt towards establishment of social stratification on gender lines. The birth of the girl child was not welcome. Upanayana ceremony (investiture ceremony) was not performed for girls. Though right to education was denied for girls, we have reference to great scholarly women as gargi, maitreyi and katyayani. Many religious ceremonies earlier performed by women were now performed by priests. Women also were deprived of the right to attend assemblies.

## Vedic Religion

**Early Vedic Period:** The Rig Vedic religion was anthropomorphic in nature. The failure of the Aryans to understand and explain the various natural phenomena made them personify the natural forces, attributing to them human or animal qualities. There were 33 Rig Vedic gods divided into three groups corresponding to the three divisions of the universe, namely terrestrial (prithivsthana), atmospheric (antarikshasthana or madhyamasthana) and celestial (dyusthana). The prominent Rig Vedic gods were,

**Indra:** He is the most important Rig Vedic god and 250 hymns are devoted to him. He is known as Purandhara or the breaker of forts. He played the role of a warlord and is also considered to be the rain god. A hymn tells of his most significant victory, his triumph over the demon vrita and the release of the waters. Indra is known by various names as Rathestha, Shatakrata, Jitendera, Meghavan and Somapa.

**Agni:** He is the fire god who is the second most important god. 200 Rig Vedic hymns are devoted to him. He is considered as the intermediary between the gods and the people. Agni is the personification of the sacrificial fire. Agni is the priest of the gods and the god of the priests. He has three forms: terrestrial as fire, atmospheric as lightning, and celestial as the sun. The cult of fire occupied a central space not only in India but also in Iran.

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**Varuna:** He was supposed to uphold the Rta or the natural order. He regulates all activities in this world. He is called the world sovereign. He is the personification of water. All gods obey him and none can defy his orders.

**Soma:** Soma was the god of plants and an intoxicating drink is named after him. In many hymns the method of preparation of Soma drink has been mentioned. Soma is the drink of Gods.

**Maruts:** They personify the storm

**Aditi:** Goddess of eternity

**Arnayani :** Goddess of the forest.

**Nirrti :** Goddess of decay and death.

**Ushas :** Goddess of dawn

**Sarma :** Messenger of Gods

**Vastospati:** God of Settlements

**Solar Phenomenon:** Is worshipped in five forms as Surya, Mitra, Savita, Pushan and Vishnu.

The dominant mode of worship of gods was through the recitation of prayers and offering of sacrifices. The Rig Vedic people did not worship gods for spiritual uplift or for ending the miseries of existence. They asked mainly for Praja (children) Pashu (cattle), food, wealth, health, etc.

**Later Vedic Period:** The two outstanding Rig Vedic gods Indra and agni lost their former importance. On the other hand Prajapati the creator, came to occupy supreme positioning the later Vedic age. Rudra, a minor god in the Rig Vedic period became important in later Vedic times. Vishnu came to be conceived as the preserver and protector of the people. Pushan was the god who looked after the cattle and came to be regarded as the god of the Shudras.

Though people continued to worship gods for material reasons, the mode of worship changed considerably. Sacrifices both domestic and public became more important than prayers. Sacrifices involved killing of animals in public, became more important than prayers. Sacrifices involved the killing of animals on a large scale leading to destruction of cattle wealth. The guest was known as goghna or one who was fed on cattle. The sacrificer was known as yajamana the performer of the yajna and he also carefully pronounced the formulae. The formulae and sacrifices were invented, adopted and elaborated by the priests called the brahmanas who claimed a monopoly of priestly knowledge and expertise. The brahmanas were given dakshina or gifts in the form of cows, gold, cloth, horses and other materials. The Satapatha Brahmana states that in the ashvamedha sacrifice, north, east, west and South should be given to the priest. There is a reference where land, which was being given to the priests, refused to be transferred to them.

Towards the end of the Vedic period began a strong reaction against priestly domination, against cults and rituals, especially in the land of the Panchalas and Videha where, around 600 B.C., the Upanishads were compiled. These philosophical texts criticised the rituals and laid stress on the value of right belief and knowledge. They emphasised that the knowledge of the self or atman should be acquired and the relation of atman with Brahma should be properly understood. Kshatriyas called for reform of the priest dominated religion. There was emphasis on the changelessness, indestructibility and immortality of atman or should and this served the cause of stability which was needed for the rising state power headed by the Kshatriya raja. Stress on the relation of atman with Brahma fostered allegiance to superior authority.

# VAJIRAM & RAVI

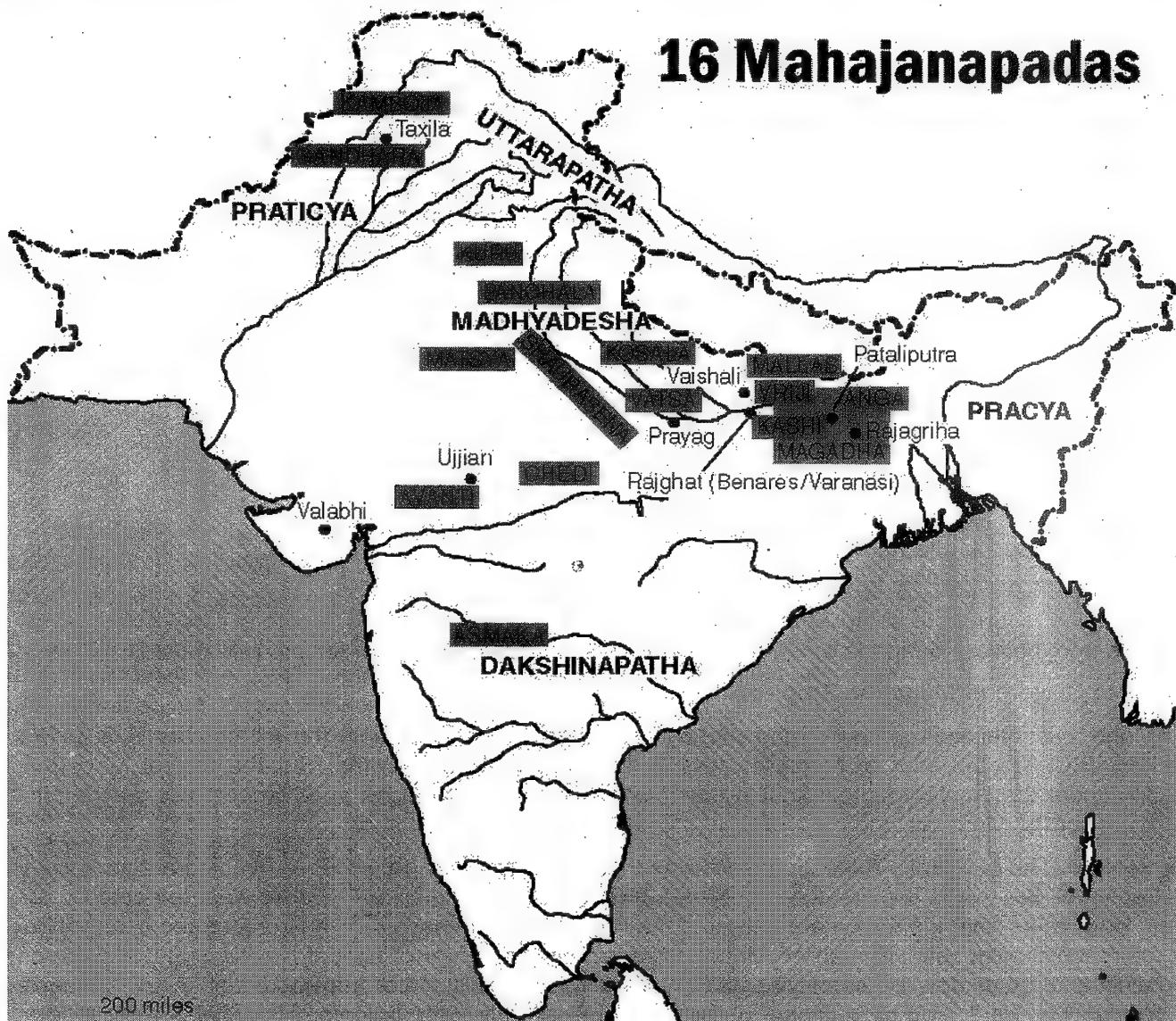
## CHAPTER - 5

### PRE-MAURYAN AGE

#### The Pre-Mauryan Age (6<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. – 4<sup>th</sup> Century B.C.)

The material advantages brought about by the use of the iron in eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C created conditions for the formation of large territorial states. Use of iron tools in agriculture produced surplus which could be taxed by the princes to finance their military and administrative needs. Also the surplus could be made available to the towns which sprung up in the 6<sup>th</sup>

## 16 Mahajanapadas



century B.C. Iron weapons also played an important part. Many janapadas sprung up in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. the larger of which were called the Mahajanapadas of which the mightiest was Magadha.

**The Mahajanapadas:** The Anguttara Nikhaya of Suttapitaka mentions the existence of 16 Mahajanapadas in the time of the Buddha. Alongwith these Mahajanapadas, many other janapadas also existed. The Mahajanapadas are:

1. Kamboja: Located in the north – western part of India with capital at Rajapura.
2. Gandhara: Located in the north-western part of India with capital of Taxila.
3. Surasenas: located in the region around Mathura with capital at Mathura.
4. Matsya: located in parts of Rajasthan with capital at virat (Bairath in Jaipur district).
5. Avanti: Located in Madhya Pradesh with northern capital at Ujjain and Southern capital at Mahishmati. Avanti had access to Iron mines.
6. Asmaka: On the banks of river Godavari with capital at Potana or Potali Asmaka (Assaka) was the southernmost Mahajanapada.
7. Kuru: Situated in Upper Ganga – Yamuna doab with capitals at Indraprastha and Hastinapura.
8. Panchalas: situated in upper Ganga-yamuna doab to the east of the Kurus with capitals at Ahichchhatra and Kampilya.
9. Koshala: situated in eastern Uttar Pradesh with capital at Ayodhya (saket) and Shravasti.
10. Mallas: In the northern border region of Koshala were the Mallas located Mallas were a republican state with capitals at Pava and Kusinagar.
11. Vatsas: To the west of Koshala along the bank of Yamuna lay the Vatsas with capital at Kaushambi near Allahabad. The Vatsas were a Kuru clan who had shifted from Hastinapur and settled down at Kaushambi.
12. Chedis: Situated on the bank of river Ken in Central India in the Budelkhand region. It's capital was Shuktimati (Sotthivatinagara).
13. Kasi: Situated on the banks of Ganga river and on the confluence of varuna and Asi. Kasi had it's capital at Varanasi.
14. Vajjis: was a confederacy of eight republican clans situated in north Bihar with it's capital at Vaishali.
15. Anga: situated to the north-east of Magadha equated with modern Munger and Bhagalpur districts of Bihar. Anga's capital was Champa.
16. Magadha: situated in south Bihar. Its capital was Rajagriha. Magadha due to a variety of reasons rose from being a janapada to a mahajanapadas and ultimately into an empire under the Mauryas.

## Rise and Growth of Magadha Empire

Magadha was the most powerful and prosperous kingdom in north India the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. to 4<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. The founder of Magadha was Jarasandha and Brihadratha. But the rise of Magadha started under the Haryankas, expansion took place under the Sisunagas and Nandas, but reached its zenith under the Mauryas.

**Haryankas:** The Haryanka ruler Bimbisara was a contemporary of the Buddha. Bimbisara also known as Seniya or Sreniya is the first king to have a standing army. Bimbisara's father was defeated by an Anga king, so as revenge Bimbisara defeated the Anga king Brahmadatta. He strengthened his position by matrimonial alliances. He married Mahakosaladevi, the daughter of king of Kosala and the sister of Prasenjit and got as dowry a kashi village. Bimbisara's second wife Chellana was a Lichchhavi princess of Vaishali who gave birth to Ajatashatru. Bimbisara also married the daughter of the chief of the Madra clan of Punjab. All these marriages paved the way for expansion of Magadha northward and westward. Although Bimbisara initially fought with Chandapradhyota Mahesena of Ujjain. He later sent his personal physician to cure him of Jaundice. The Gandhara ruler of Taxila Pukkusati (Pushkarasarin) set an embassy to Bimbisara. So through his conquests and diplomacy, Magadha became the paramount power in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. so much so that Magadha is said to have consisted of 80, 000 villages.

Buddhist chronicles say Bimbisara ruled from 544–492 B.C. Nothing definite can be resolved whether Bimbisara was a follower of Jainism or Buddhism, though both religions claim him to be their supporter.

**Ajatashatru (492–460 B.C.)** succeeded Bimbisara to the throne. It is said that Ajatashatru killed his father to occupy the throne. He adopted an aggressive policy of expansion. Ajatashatru's killing of his father led to grief of Mahakosaladevi and so Prasenjit, king of Koshala revoked Kashi which led to war in which Koshala was defeated. Prasenjit also had to give his daughter Vajira in marriage to Ajatashatru. Though Ajatashatru's mother Chellana was Lichchhavis princess, he entered into war with the Lichchhavis accusing them of allying with Koshala. Ajatashatru sowed dissensions among his enemies and through his use of advanced ministers, he finally destroyed Vaishali after a protracted war of sixteen years. Ajatashatru also fortified Rajagriha to meet the threat from Avanti anticipating an invasion which did not materialise. Udayin (460–444 B.C.) succeeded Ajatashatru and he built the fort upon the confluence of the Ganga and son at Patna for strategic purposes.

**Sisunagas:** Udayin was succeeded by the dynasty of Sisunagas who temporarily shifted the capital to Vaishali. They destroyed the power of Avanti which brought to an end the rivalry between Magadha and Avanti. A Sisunaga ruler Kalasoka (Kakavarin) transferred the capital from Vaishali to Pataliputra. The Sisunagas were in course of time supplanted by the Nandas.

**Nandas:** The Nandas were powerful rulers. Mahapadmananda was a great conqueror called variously as Ekarat, Eka-Chchhatra or Sarvakshatrantaka. Eka – Chchhatra meant that he brought the whole earth under one umbrella. Sarvakshatrantaka meant that he destroyed all the Kshatriya kingdoms of the time. Mahapadmananda is credited with conquering Koshala. He also conquered Kalinga from where he brought an image of the Jina as a victory trophy. The nandas maintained a huge army through an effective taxation system. The last Nanda ruler Dhanananda was ruling Magadha at the time of Alexander's invasion of the north-western part of India. But Dhanananda's huge army deterred Alexander from advancing against the Nandas. But Chandragupta Maurya ably assisted by Kautilya overthrew Dhanananda to set up the Mauryan empire.

### **Causes of Magadha's success**

1. Magadha was led by competent and ambitious ruler like Bimbisara, Ajatashatru and Mahapadmananda.
2. Rajagriha the capital of Magadha was also known as Girivraja since it was surrounded by a group of five hills which acted as a natural fort. Pataliputra the later capital of Magadha was known as Jaladurga since it was located at the confluence of the Ganga, the Gandak, the son and a fourth river called the Ghagra joined the Ganga not far from Pataliputra. The rivers could be used for defence, communications and trade.
3. The resource base of Magadha was broad. The land was fertile and agricultural surplus could be produced. Magadha was rich in minerals such as iron from which agricultural tools and also weapons could be produced. The forests around Magadha produced elephants and also sufficient timber.
4. The Nandas streamlined an administrative system with vast bureaucracy which dug canals for expansion of agriculture, promoted trade and commerce and collected taxes adding to financial muscle of Magadha.
5. Magadha had a massive military machine with vast infantry, horses, elephants, chariots and also innovative armaments such as rathamusula and mahasilakantika developed by Ajatashatru.
6. Magadha was inhabited by the Kiratas and Magadhas. Magadha then underwent a racial admixture with the advent of Vedic people. As it was recently Aryanised, it showed more enthusiasm than those kingdoms already under Aryan influence. Also Magadha was outside the pale of Vedic culture as a result of which it did not suffer from the disabilities stemming from orthodox brahmanical

culture. So competent rulers could arise from any social group and they in turn promoted Buddhism, Jainism and other heterodox sects.

**The Republican States:** The republican tradition in India is as old as age of the Buddha. Though in the pre-Mauryan age monarchies were far stronger and more common, the republics existed either in the Indus basin where they may have been the remnants of the Vedic tribes or in the foothills of the Himalayas in eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar where they were possibly inspired by old ideas of tribal equality which did not give much prominence to single raja.

The republic unlike the monarchies were ruled by tribal oligarchies where every tribal oligarch was known as raja. The rajas in a republic were free to maintain their own little army under his senapati, so that each of them could compete with the other. The brahmanas unlike in the monarchies had no place in the early republics. In the republics of Shakyas and Lichchhavis the tribal oligarchies which constituted the ruling class belonged to the same clan and the same varna. The administrative machinery of the Shakyas and Lichchhavis was simple. It consisted of Raja, Uparaja (vice-king), Senapati (Commander) and Bhandagarika (treasurer). We hear of as many as seven courts in the hierarchical order for trying the same case. The Lichchhavis are said to be the oldest republic in the world. There were said to be 7707 rajas resident at Vaishali, the capital of the Lichchhavis republic and the Vajji confederacy of which Lichchhavis republic was of member. The administration of the Lichchhavis was much admired by the Buddha. Ajatashatru's war with the Lichchhavis for a period of sixteen years ultimately led to defeat of the Lichchhavis.

Some of the republic in the pre-Mauryan age are:

1. The Shakyas of Kapilavastu to which Lord Buddha belonged.
2. The Lichchhavis of Vaisali.
3. Mallas of Pava. Mahavira breathed his last at Pava.
4. Mallas of Kusinagar. Buddha breathed his last at Kusinagar.
5. The Koliyas of Ramagrama.
6. The Bhaggas of Sumsumasa.
7. The Moriyas of Pippalavahana.
8. The Kalamas of Kesaputta.
9. The Videhas of Mithila.
10. The Jnatrikas of Kundalagrama to which Lord Mahavira belonged.

## Iranian and Greek Invasions

**Iranian Invasion:** In the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. north-west India was a picture of political fragmentation. Several small principalities as Gandhara, Kamboja and Madra fought one another. The north-west did not have a strong kingdom like Magadha which could weld all the warring communities together. This area was also wealthy and could be easily entered through the passes in the Hindukush. So, it was only natural that the Achaemenid rulers of Persia wanted to take advantage of the political disunity on the north-western frontier.

Cyrus of Persia (588-530 BC) was the first foreign conqueror who led an expedition and penetrated well into India. He destroyed the city of Capisa, located to the north of Kabul. All Indian tribes to the west of Indus right upto Kabul region submitted to Cyrus and paid him tribute.

Darius-I, the grandson of Cyrus penetrated into north-west India in 515 B.C. and annexed Punjab, west of the Indus and Sindh. The north-west frontier constituted the 20<sup>th</sup> satrapy or province of Persia of a total of 28 provinces. It was the most fertile and populous part of the empire which paid a tribute of 360 talents of gold. The Indian Soldiers were also enrolled in the Persian army.

Xerxes deployed Indian contingents in Greece to fight his opponents.

Darius-III enlisted Indian soldiers and sent them to fight.

**Impact of Iranian Invasion:** The Indo contact lasted for 200 years. The north-west came under Persian control and was a source of revenue for the Persians. Indian soldiers were enrolled in the Iranian army and even fought the Greeks. Impetus was given to Indo-Iranian trade and commerce. Iranian coins found in the north-western frontier point to the existence of trade with Iran. The Iranian scribes brought into India a form of writing which came to be known as Kharoshhti script, which was like Arabic written from right to left. Some Ashokan inscriptions in north-western India were written in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. in this script. Perhaps the idea of the rock inscription used so effectively by Ashoka was inspired by the rock inscriptions of Darius. Iranian influence may also be traced in the preamble of Ashoka's edicts as well as in certain terms used in them. For instance, the term dipi (an Iranian one) was used as lipi by the Ashokan scribes. Even in sculpture, Iranian influence is clearly perceptible. The monuments of Ashoka's time, especially the ball-shaped capitals owed something to the Iranian model. Further, it seems that it is through the Iranians that the Greeks came to know about the great wealth of India which whetted their appetite and eventually led to Alexander's invasion of India.

**Alexander's Invasion:** Alexander's desire for world conquest and his passion for geographical enquiry and natural history meant that he set out to conquer India. The political condition of north-west India suited his plans as this area was parcelled into many independent monarchies and tribal republics.

Alexander marched to India through the Khyber Pass in 326 B.C. It took him 5 months to reach the Indus. Ambhi, the ruler of Taxila submitted before him. When he reached Jhelum, Alexander met from Porus, the first and the strongest resistance. Although he defeated Porus, Alexander restored to Porus his kingdom, impressed by his courage and bravery. He then went on to conquer many small states one by one. Then he advanced to the Beas beyond which lay the mighty Nandas. Alexander wanted to move further east, but his war-weary, diseased soldiers, thanks to the hot climate and ten years of continuous campaigns became terribly homesick. The Greek soldiers also heard of the formidable power on the Ganga which might not be able to subdue. So Alexander was forced to retreat after dividing his territorial possessions into three posts and placing them under three Greek governors. North-western India was placed under Selucus Nikator. Alexander remained in India from 326-325 B.C. for nineteen months. He died in Babylon in 323 B.C. at the age of thirty-three years.

**Impact of Alexander's Invasion:** Alexander's invasion provided the first occasion when ancient Europe came into close contact with ancient India. It produced some important results. Politically, the Indian campaign of Alexander was a success as he added to his empire an Indian province much larger than that conquered by Iran. Alexander destroyed the power of petty states in the north-west and created a political vacuum which was filled by the expansion of the Mauryan empire in that area under Chandragupta Maurya. Economically, Alexander's campaign opened up four distinct routes by land and sea paving the way for Greek merchants and craftsmen and increased the existing facilities for trade. Alexander's campaign also led to the establishment of some Greek settlements in the north-west such as Alexandria in the Kabul region, Alexandria in Sind and Boukephala on the Jhelum. Although these areas were later conquered by the Mauryas, the Greeks continued to live under the Mauryas.

Alexander was deeply interested in the geography of the mysterious ocean which he saw for the first time at the mouth of the Indus. Therefore, he dispatched his new fleet under Nearchus to explore the coast and search for harbours from the mouth of the Indus to that of the Euphrates. Alexander's historians have left valuable geographical accounts. They also have left clearly dated records of his campaign, which enable us to build Indian chronology for subsequent events on a definite basis. They also give us important information about social and economic conditions. They tell us about the sati system, the sale of girls in market places by poor parents and the fine breed of oxen in north-west India.

## Society in the Pre-Mauryan Period

1. The division of tribal society into four classes - Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras necessitated the founding of the Indian legal and judicial system in this period and so the dharma-sutras laid down the duties, rights, obligations and disabilities of various social groups.
2. The higher the Varna the purer it was and higher was the order of moral conduct expected by civil and criminal law. All kinds of disabilities were imposed on the Sudras and various privileges were cornered by the brahmanas and Kshatriyas.
3. Sudras were not invested with upanayana. They were given punishments disproportionate to the crime committed. Members of higher varnas shunned the company of Sudras, avoided the food touched by him and refused to enter into marriage relations with them. A sudra could not be appointed to the high posts. The Sudra was asked to serve the twice – born as slave, artisan and agricultural labourer. In this respect even Buddhism and Jainism did not materially change his position.
4. Civil and criminal law was administered by royal agents, who inflicted rough and ready punishments such as whipping, beheading, mutilation etc. In many cases punishments for criminal offences were governed by the idea of revenge. It meant tooth for tooth and eye for eye.
5. The brahmanical law givers did not ignore the customs of the non-vedic tribal groups which were gradually absorbed into the brahmanical social order.
6. Restrictions were imposed by the brahmanas on traders by saying that some lands being impure should not be visited.
7. Restrictions were imposed on women. Education was denied to them and they were not entitled to upanayana ceremony. Ganikas (courtesans) were an integral part of society.
8. The brahmanical law books, the Dharmasutras, decried lending of money on interest. They condemned the Vaishyas who lent money on account of growing trade and commerce.

**Economic Conditions:** The large scale use of Iron led to large scale development of agriculture in the pre-mauryan age. In the monarchies gahapatis owned large tracts of land and in republics raja-kulas owned large tracts of land. The dasa-karmakaras (slaves and labourers) worked in fields of gahapatis and rajakulas. The private and state ownership of land continued side by side. Agriculture became advanced and irrigation methods improved. Various new crops were cultivated. Vrihi and Sali terms were used to refer to two new varieties of rice. Land was measured in units called Karisa, Nivartan and Kulyavapa. The term 'Sita' was used to refer to state lands. Crops such as rice, sugarcane, wheat, barley, lentils, rapeseed, mustard, cotton were grown proper manuring methods were used. Most of the agriculture was now practiced by the Sudras.

There was development of industry and crafts, with upto 18 crafts corporations or guilds mentioned in Buddhist literature. The term Sreni is used to refer to a guild or a corporations. Srenis or Nigams were headed by a leader known as pammuka, pravara or Jyestha. Srenis had their own armed guards – srenibala, srenis had their own courts called Sreninyayalaya and the Srenis were bound by their own laws or regulations called Srenidharm. Srenis maintained proper quality of products. Srenis circulated their own seals. They also adopted lending business on a small scale.

The surplus in agriculture and increased craft production led to a spurt in trade and creation of trade circuits all over north India. Most of the routes were along the rivers. One route was from Taxila to Rajagriha through various important towns. There was another route from Mathura to Ujjain and thence from Ujjain to Mahishmati to the sea port of Baruch. There was a route from Pataliputra to Champa to the port of Tamralipti in West Bengal. Thus the whole north India was linked by various trade routes. Traders moved in Caravans called Sartha and the carrier of Sartha was known as Sarthavaha. Anathapindika was a Sreshti of Sravasti who was one of the richest men on earth he donated Jetuvana Vihar to the Buddha. Mendaka was another Sreshti of Rajagriha so rich as to pay the salary

of Magadha army. The traders were provided security by the kings. The great traders were also involved in banking and they issued coins bearing punch marks. These bankers were known as Sresthi's.

Potters were an important section of society. Northern Black Polished ware (NBPW) was the typical pottery of this period which first appeared between Varanasi and Pataliputra. In the eastern areas, Black and Red Ware is directly followed by NBPW whereas in the western areas Black and Red ware is followed by Painted gray Ware (PGW) which gave way to Northern black Polished Ware (NBPW).

### Causes of Origin of Buddhism and Jainism

The term intellectual revolution may be used to indicate the remarkable richness of vigour in thought which one could come across in the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. There were 363 orders of thought and 62 philosophers were known. Of the various Sects Buddhism and Jainism were prominent.

1. The four-fold stratification of society on the basis of varna generated tensions. The Kshatriyas reacted strongly against the ritualistic domination of the brahmanas and seem to have led a kind of protest movement against the importance attached to birth in the varna system. Vardhamana Mahavira, who founded Jainism and Gautama Buddha, who founded Buddhism belonged to Kshatriya clan, and both disputed the authority of the brahmanas.
2. The real reason though was the rise of a new agricultural economy in north-eastern India which required the use of bullocks. But the Vedic practice of killing cattle in Sacrifices led to decimation of cattle wealth. So Buddhism and Jainism propagated the ideal of Ahimsa and spoke out against the Vedic sacrifices.
3. The rise of a large number of cities in north-eastern India and the use of punch-marked coins facilitated trade and commerce, which added to the importance of Vaishyas who looked for some religion which could improve their position and so supported Buddhism and Jainism.
4. The common man did not like the various forms of private property which created social inequalities. Neither did they endorse new dwellings, dresses and transport systems which amounted to luxury. So the common people yearned to return to primitive life. Both Buddhism and Jainism preferred simple, puritan ascetic living. So Buddhism and Jainism were essentially a revolt against the changes in material life in the mid-Ganga plain in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Century B.C.

### Causes of popularity of Buddhism and Jainism

1. Both Gautama Buddha and Vardhamana Mahavira were magnetic personalities who could profoundly influence anybody they came into contact with.
2. Buddhism used Pali and Jainism used Prakrit, both languages of the common people which helped in their spread.
3. Buddhism did not indulge in metaphysical discussions and suggested a simple and practical way of living.
4. They were patronised by various kingdoms. The Nandas patronised Jainism while the Mauryas patronised Buddhism.
5. They did not attach much importance to the existing varna system and hence appealed to the lower classes.
6. Mahavira followed a liberal policy towards women. Admission of women to the Sangha swelled the ranks of Buddhism.

### Similarities between Buddhism and Jainism

1. Both the religions were founded by Kshatriyas in eastern India.

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2. Both were against the ritualistic interpretation of Vedas and opposed Brahmanical domination. They uphold the essence of Vedas.
3. Both preached truth, non-violence, celibacy, and detachment from material comforts.
4. Both were non-theistic religions
5. Both believed in karma and re-birth
6. Both allowed the Sudras and women to follow the religion, become monks and attain salvation
7. Both of them spread as a result of teaching in the language of the common man.
8. Both were opposed to caste system but could not eliminate it.

### Differences between Buddhism and Jainism

1. Jainism gave prominence to lay followers, while Buddhism relied mainly on the Sangha and its monks.
2. The method of attaining salvation for Jainas was an extreme one, but for the Buddhists it was a moderate one.
3. Jainism was confined to India, but survived in it. Buddhism spread rapidly to foreign lands, but died in India.
4. Jainism is more liberal in its treatment of women.
5. Jainism believed in soul and Buddhism did not.
6. Jainism laid over-emphasis on Ahimsa. In Buddhism, Ahimsa meant liberal feelings and practical behaviour.

### Buddhism

The religion of Buddhism was founded by Gautam Buddha known originally as Siddharta. He belonged to the republican tribe Sakyas of Kapilavastu. He was born in 563 B.C. at Lumbini. He is said to have renounced the world (mahabhinishkramana) at the age of 29 years after witnessing four scenes in a sequence (old man, sick man, dead body and ascetic) and attained nirvana at 35 years of age at Bodhgaya under a Pipal tree on the banks of Niranjan (Phalgu) river on the 49<sup>th</sup> day of meditation. He delivered his first sermon (dharma-chakra parivarthana) at Sarnath and died at the age of 80 years in 483 B.C. at Kusinagar in U.P.

Since Buddha was born in the republican clan of Sakyas, he was known as Sakyamuni. Suddhodhana (father), Mahamaya (mother), Yashodhara (wife), Rahula (son), Devadatta (Cousin), Alara Kalama of Vaishali, Gautami (Step-mother, also first Buddhist nun), Ananda (his favourite disciple), Channa (the charioteer), Kanthaka (his horse), Kassapa or Kasyapa (his most learned disciple), Upali (the barber), Yasa (the rich youth) were some of the important people in his life.

### Five events and their Symbols

1. Birth – Lotus and bull
2. Great – renunciation – horse
3. Nirvana – Bodhi tree
4. First Sermon – Dharmachakra or the 8 – spoked wheel
5. Parinirvana or death – Stupa

### His four noble truths (Arya Satyas)

1. The world is full of sorrows

2. The cause of sorrow is desire
3. If desires are conquered, all sorrows can be removed
4. The only way this can be done is by following the 8-fold path.

The second truth, is based on Buddha's doctrine of 'Paticchchha – Samuppada' or 'Pratitya – Samutpada', i.e. law of dependent origination or causation.

### **Eight – fold Path (Ashtangamarga)**

1. Right understanding
2. Right thought
3. Right speech
4. Right action
5. Right livelihood
6. Right effort
7. Right mindfulness
8. Right concentration

} Wisdom (Pragya Skanda)

} Morality (Sheel Skanda)

} Concentration (Samadhi Skanda)

### **Three Jewels (Triratnas)**

1. Buddha (the enlightened)
2. Dhamma (doctrine)
3. Sangha (order)

### **Buddhist Councils**

**First Council:** It was held immediately after the death of Buddha in 483 B.C. at Rajagriha under the patronage of Ajatashatru, under the Chairmanship of Mahkassapa. In this council Ananda composed the Suttapitaka containing the Buddha's sayings and Upali composed the Vinayapitaka containing the monastic codes of Buddhism.

**Second Council:** It was held in 383 B.C. at Vaishali under the patronage of Kalasoka and chairmanship of Sabakami. There was division of the Buddhist sangha into the orthodox sthaviravadins or Theravadins and the unorthodox Mahasanghikas.

**Third Council:** It was held in 250 B.C. at Pataliputra under the patronage of Ashoka and chairmanship of Moggaliputta Tissa (Upagupta). The third council led to the establishment of the Sthaviravadins as the true followers. Abhidhamma Pitaka, the third of the Buddhist Pali canon was composed at the third council.

**Fourth Council:** It was held in 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D. at Kashmir under the patronage of Kanishka and Chairmanship of Vasumitra. It resulted in the division of Buddhists into two major sects- Hinayana and Mahayana. The deliberations of the council were in Sanskrit instead of Pali. Spread of Buddhism to other Asian countries – Mahayanism in Central Asia, China and Japan, and Hinayanism in Ceylon, Burma, Thailand and parts of South-East Asia.

	<b>Hinayana Buddhism</b>	<b>Mahayana Buddhism</b>
1	Hinayana held firm to the letter of Buddha's teachings	Mahayana held firm to the essence of Buddha's teachings
2	Hinayana developed with the Sangha as the Centre	Mahayana developed with the individual as the centre

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3	Hinayana Scriptures are written mainly Pali and are founded on the Tripitaka.	Mahayana scriptures written in Sanskrit are the sutras.
4	Hinayana believes in Salvation by works, that each man must work out his own Salvation	Mahayana believes in Salvation by faith
5	Hinayana is centred round the acts of Buddha	Mahayana is centred around the Symbolism of Buddha's life and personality
6	Hinayana stressed righteous action and the law of Karma	Mahayana held that over and above the law of Karma was law of karuna or compassion
7	The Hinayana idea is the Arhat, who strives after his own redemption	Mahayana upholds the ideal of the Bodhisattva or saviour who is concerned with the salvation of others.
8	Hinayana literally means the lesser vehicle.	Mahayana literally means the greater vehicle.

**Hinayana literature:** The religious literature of Hinayana consists of the Pali canonical texts, several semi-canonical works and Ceylonese chronicles.

1. The Pali canonical texts are the tripitakas. The largest and the most important of the three is the Sutta Pitaka which consists of five nikayas (groups) viz. Digha Nikaya, Majjhima Nikaya, Samyuktta Nikaya, Anguttara Nikaya and Khuddaka Nikaya. The Khuddaka Nikaya consists of, among others the Jatakas and the Dhammapada (the psalms of brothers and sisters).
2. Among the Semi-canonical works, the most important is the Milindo Panho (Questions of Milinda or Menander), on account of the discussion between Indo-Greek king Menander and the Buddhist monk Nagasena.
3. Ceylonese chronicles are the Dipavamsa (Island chronicle), Mahavamsa (Great chronicle) and Culavamsa (Lesser Chronicle).

**Mahayana:** It was divided into two chief philosophical schools called the Madhyamika (middle way) and the Yogachara (way of union). Nagarjuna (1<sup>st</sup> century AD) was the founder of this school and his Madhyamika Karika forms the basic text of Madhyamika philosophy. His teachings were also known as Sunyavada (doctrine of void). The Yogachara school, also known as the Vijnanavada (doctrine of consciousness) was founded by Maitreyanatha. It completely rejected the realism of Hinayanism and maintained absolute idealism. Later it came to be propagated by several philosophers like Asanga (author of Sutralankara), Vasubandhu (Asanga's brother and minister-teacher of Samudragupta).

The Mahayanists had their own version of the Tripitakas in Sanskrit. But they gave a lot of prominence to an entirely new set of literature in Sanskrit, called the Vaipulya Sutras (Expanded Discourses), which they claimed to be the pronouncements of the Buddha. The most important among them is the Sadharma-pundarika. Their other scriptures include the Lalitavistara (a flowery account of the life of the Buddha), Vajrachedika, Sukhavativyuha etc.

**Vajrayanism:** Its followers believed that Salvation could be best attained by acquiring the magical power, which they called 'Vajra' (thunder-bolt). The chief divinities of this new Sect were the Taras (wives of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas) who should be compelled rather than persuaded to bestow magical power on the worshipper by performing the 'tantra' and reciting the 'Mantra'.

### Causes for the decline of Buddhism

1. Buddhism eventually succumbed to the very rituals of ceremonies it originally denounced.
2. Inspired by Buddhism and Jainism, there was reform of Brahmanism and there was rise of Bhagavatism.

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3. Buddhists gave up the use of Pali and took up the use of Sanskrit from the first century A.D.
4. From the first century AD, the Buddhists started practicing idol-worship and receiving offerings and huge donations, leading to the deterioration of moral standards.
5. Attacks of Huna's such as Mihirakula, and the Turkish invaders such as Bakhtiyar Khilji led to decimation of Buddhism.

### Importance of Buddhism

1. Replacement of dogmatism and faith with reason and logic.
2. Promotion of trade and commerce.
3. Concept of ahimsa (non-violence) was its chief contribution. Ahimsa boosted the cattle wealth of the country and became one of the cherished values of Indian culture.
4. Improvement of condition of women and other downtrodden sections
5. Promotion of Pali and many other local language.
6. Promotion of education through residential universities like those at Taxila, Naarjunakonda, Nalanda and Vikramasila.
7. Buddhist architecture developed essentially in three forms-Stupa, Chaitya, Vihara. The Stupa is a domical structure in which the relics of the Buddha or some prominent Buddhists monk are preserved. Chaitya is a temple or shrine with a prayer hall. A Vihara is a monastery or residence of monks.
8. In the field of art and architecture Buddhism takes the credit for:
  - (a) First human statues to be worshiped
  - (b) Stone-pillars depicting the life of Buddha at Gaya, Sanchi and Bharhut.
  - (c) Gandhara art and the beautiful images of the Buddha
  - (d) Cave architecture in the Barabar hills at Gaya and in western Indian around Nasik.
  - (e) Art pieces of Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda.
9. Buddhism has also contributed for spread of Indian culture to other parts of Asia.

### Jainism

Vardhamana, who later became Mahavira (Great Hero) or Jina (Conqueror) was born as the second son in 540 B.C. at Kundaligram near Vaishali. His father Siddhartha was the head of a Kshatriya clan called the Jnatrikas; and his mother Trisala was the sister of Chetaka, the most famous of the Lichchhavi princes and ruler of Vaishali. Mahavira was married to Yashoda, by whom he had a daughter Anjna. He became an ascetic at the age of 30 years after the death of his parents. For two years he was a member of an order founded by Parsvanatha, but left it later and roamed for the next 10 years. He spent the first six years of his wandering with Gosala Maskariputra (founder of the Ajivika Sect). After attaining Kaivalya (perfect knowledge) under a Sal tree at Trimbhikagrama in eastern India at the age of 42, he preached for 30 years and died at the age of 72 in 468 B.C. at Pavapuri near Rajagriha. He became the head of a sect, called nirgranthas (free from fetters), who later came to be known as 'Jinas'.

**Five Cardinal Principles:** The five cardinal principles of Jainism are;

1. Non-violence (ahimsa)
2. No lies (satya)
3. No stealing (asteya)

4. No property (a parigraha)
5. Observing continence (brahmacharya)

The five principles when observed by the monks strictly are known as 'mahavrata', but when lay members practice them they are called 'anuvratas'. Only the fifth principle of 'brahmacharya' was supposed to have been added by Mahavira, the other four being the teachings of his predecessors. According to Jaina tradition, Mahavira was the 24<sup>th</sup> tirthankara. Parsvanath (son of King Asvasena of kasi) is believed to be the 23<sup>rd</sup> thirhankara and Rishabadeva (mentioned in the Rigveda) is believed to be the first tirthanakara.

### Ratnatraya (Three Gems)

1. Full knowledge
2. Action
3. Liberation

### Jain Church

1. Mahavira had eleven close disciples or apostles known as 'gandharas' (heads of schools). Only one of them, Arya Sudharman, survived Mahavira and became the 'Thera' (potiff) of the Jaina church after his death.
2. Sudharman's successor was Jambu. Three generations of Pontiffs passed after him.
3. During the reign of the last Nanda ruler of Magadha, the Jaina church was ruled by Sambhutavijaya.
4. Kalpasutra, a Jain book was written by Bhadrabahu who was the sixth thera after Mahavira, was a contemporary of Chandragupta Maurya.

**Schism and Councils:** There was a serious famine in the Ganga valley leading to a great exodus of many Jaina monks to the Deccan and south India to Sravanabelagola alongwith Bhadrabahu and Chandragupta Maurya. They returned after 12 years. The leader of the group which stayed back was Sthulabahu. Difference between the two groups over the code of conduct led to the division of the Jainas into Digambaras (sky – clad or naked) and the Svetambaras (white-clad).

**First council:** Held at Pataliputra by Sthulabahu in the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. and led to compilation of the 12 Angas to replace the last 14 purvas. They were accepted only by the Svetambaras.

**Second Council:** Held at Valabhi in the 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D. by the Svetambaras under the leadership of Devardhi Kshamasramana, and final compilation of the 12 Angas and 12 upangas.

### Contribution of Jainism

1. Jainism made the first serious attempt to mitigate the evils of the varna system and the ritualistic Vedic religion.
2. The early Jainas discarded Sanskrit and adopted Prakrit language for preaching. Their religious literature was written in Ardhamagadhi, and the texts were finally compiled in 6<sup>th</sup> century AD at Valabhi in Gujarat.
3. Out of Suraseni Prakrit, Marathi language grew. Jainas also composed the earliest important works in Apabrahmsa and prepared its first grammar.
4. Jaina's started worshipping statues of Mahavira developed from various schools of art.
5. Jainism contributed substantially to art and architecture in medieval times.

6. The gigantic statues of Bahubali called Gomatesvara at Sravanabelogola, Karkal and Mysore were built out of granite by Chamudaraya, the minister of a Ganga ruler, Rchamalla.

## Other Heterodox Sects

1. **Ajivikas:** They were a heterodox sect founded by Gosala Maskariputra or Makhali, who was at first a close friend and later a strong opponent of Mahavira. He believed in fate called 'niyati'. Ajivikas prospered during the pre-Mauryan and Maurya times but declined later.
2. **Pakudha Katyayana:** He preached that just as earth, water, air and light are indestructible elements, so are sorrow, happiness and life. He was predecessor of Hindu Vaishesika school.
3. **Purana Kassapa:** He believed that virtuous conduct had no effect on a man's karma. He laid the foundations for Samkha Philosophy.
4. **Ajita Keshakambalin:** He was the earliest known teacher of complete materialism. He propagated the Uchchedavada, i.e. annihilationism; later the Lokayata or Charvaka School originated from this doctrine.
5. **Sanjaya Balattipura:** He was a sceptic who denied the possibility of certain knowledge altogether.

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**CHAPTER - 6**

**MAURYAN EMPIRE**

**The Mauryan Empire (321 B.C.-184 B.C.)**

**Origin:** The origin of the Mauryas eludes unanimity among the historians. It becomes difficult to arrive at a reasonable conclusion owing to the abundance of sources, some of which may be biased. Brahmanical sources like the Puranas say that Chandragupta Maurya was born of Mora, a Shudra woman in the court of the Nandas. This may be a biased view in reaction to the patronage accorded to the heterodox sects by the Mauryas. Buddhist texts assert that Chandragupta Maurya belonged to the Kshatriya republican clan Mariyas of Pippalavahana might be an attempt to elevate the social class of Ashoka and his predecessors. Jain sources say that Chandragupta Maurya was the son of a village headman's daughter. Visakhadatta in his book Mudrarakshasa (written in the Gupta period) refers to Chandragupta Maurya as 'Vrishala' which literally means of law origin. Junagarh rock inscription of Rudradaman dated 150 A.D. mentions that Vaishya Pushagupta was the provincial governor of Saurashtra under Chandragupta Maurya. Justin, the Greek writer of 'Epitome' mentions that Sandrocottus (identified as Chandragupta Maurya by William Jones) visited the court of Alexander and that he was of humble origin.

**Chandragupta Maurya (321-297 B.C.):** He rose to power in a society which was never very orthodox. In the north-west there had been considerable contacts with the foreigners and Magadha itself was looked down upon in Brahmanical tradition. Besides, it was considerably exposed to the ideas of Buddha and Mahavira, it was thus amidst considerable turmoil socially and politically that he rose to power in Magadha. He was a military genius ably guided by a statesman like Kautilya with favourable conditions for his rise. Justin says that Chandragupta Maurya overran the whole of India with an army of 6,00,000 which may be an exaggeration. He probably started conquests from the north-western part of India instead of attacking the central power of Magadha first.

Alexander's invasion directly and indirectly contributed to the fall of prevailing political systems in the north-west and created a political vacuum which was skilfully used by Chandragupta Maurya. The Greek satraps and their soldiers desired to go home and also there was revolt of Indian satrapies. The death of Alexander in 323 B.C. further emboldened them. In this situation, Chandragupta Maurya confronted Selucus and settled the 1st Treaty of Partition in 321 B.C., territory of Selucus east of Indus was ceded to Chandragupta Maurya.

Chandragupta Maurya along-with Kautilya proceeded with the mission to overthrow the Nandas. It was a prolonged affair. Parsistaparvan says that Kautilya and Chandragupta Maurya entered into an alliance with Parvataka and the allied armies beat the Nandas in a dangerous game as a result of which Dhananada abdicated and fled. All accounts Buddhist, Jain and Brahmanic agree that the Nandas were routed completely. In 305 BC Selucus made a bid to reconquer lost territories and a treaty was concluded in 303 B.C. with Chandragupta Maurya according to which Selucus ceded Aria (Heart), Arachosia (Kandahar), Gedrosia (Baluchistan) and Paropanishdae (Kabul). There was also a matrimonial alliance between the families Chandragupta Maurya gave Selucus a gift of 500 elephants and Selucus in turn appointed Megasthenes as an ambassador to the royal court at Pataliputra. According to Jaina tradition, Chandragupta embraced Jainism towards the end of his life and stepped down from the throne in favour of his son, Bindusara. Chandragupta then went to Sravanabelagola and starved to death in typical Jaina fashion.

**Bindusara (297-272 B.C.):** He was known to the Greeks as 'Amitro Chates' and is said to have carried his arms to the Deccan as far as Mysore. Bindusara also had contacts with Antiochus I, the Selucid king of Syria whose ambassador, Deimachus, was said to have been at the Mauryan court. Bindusara was interested in the Ajivika sect. During Bindusara's reign, there was suppression of a

revolt at Taxila by Ashoka. Taranatha, the Buddhist monk credits Bindusara with conquering the land between the two seas.

**Ashoka (268-232 B.C.):** There was a struggle for the throne among the princes on Bindusara's death for a period of four years. Ashoka emerged the successor and formally crowned himself in 268 B.C. The most important event of Asoka's reign seems to have been his victorious war with Kalinga in 260 B.C. The Bhabra inscription states that after a period of two-and-a-half years he became an ardent supporter of Buddhism under the influence of a Buddhist monk Upagupta. One of the Ashokan inscriptions Major Rock Edict XIII refers to his southernmost neighbours as Cholas, Pandyas, Satyaputras and Keralaputras. Also mentioned is made of various contemporaries of Ashoka in the Greek world. They were Antiochus II of Syria, Ptolemy II of Egypt, Antigonus of Macedonia, Magas of Cyrene and Alexander of Epirus. Ashoka also had connections with Nepal and gave one of his daughters called Charumati in marriage to a noble called Devapala from Nepal. The Ceylonese ruler, Tissa, modelled himself on Asoka. The latter sent his son Mahendra and daughter Sanghamitra as Buddhist missionaries to Ceylon, besides sending a sapling of the original pipal tree under which the Buddha had received enlightenment. From literary and epigraphic evidence we come to know that Ashoka's mother was Subhadrangi and among his brother Susima (eldest) and Tissa (youngest) are clearly identified. The list of his wives include Asandhimitta, Tissaraka or Kauravaki, Padmavati etc. Among Ashoka's sons, Mahendra, Tivara (the only one mentioned in an inscription), Kunala and Taluka are prominent. Two of his daughter Sanghamitra and Charumati are known.

**Later Mauryas (232-184 BC):** Following the death of Ashoka, the Mauryan empire was divided into two parts – western and eastern. The western part came to be ruled by Kunala and then for a short time by Samprati. The eastern part was ruled successively by Dasratha, Samprati, Salisuka, Devaraman, Satadhanvan and finally Brihadratha. The last Mauryan ruler Brihadratha was assassinated in 184 B.C. by his Brahmin commander-in-chief, Pushyamitra Sunga, who established his own Sunga dynasty.

### Maurya Administration

The Maurya state was more or less a welfare state. It was a highly centralised government which marks the first successful experiment in imperial government by the Indians.

**Central Administration:** The king was the pivot of the administrative superstructure. The Mauryas were paternal monarchs who considered all his subjects as his children. Mantrins were the ministers and advisers of the highest grade whose advice had to be sought by the king in all administrative matters. The number of mantrins varies from three to four. The Mantriparishad was the Mauryan ministry and it included the mantrins and some other officials. Kautilya clearly distinguishes the mantrins from the mantriparishad. Amatyas were civil servants who filled the highest administrative and judicial appointments. Their qualifications and method of selection are laid out by Kautilya. Their role and functions are very important, for all governmental work proceeded from them. Kautilya's 'amatyas' are similar to the 'mahamattas' of Ashokan edicts.

**Revenue department:** It was manned by Samharta (in-charge of collection of all revenue of the empire) and 'Sannidhata' (chief treasury officer).

**Military department:** It was under the control of senapati under whom there were several adhyakshas or superintendents of different wings and units of the army such as infantry, cavalry, war elephants, chariots, admiralty and transport. According to Megasthenes, there were six committees of five members each to look after this department.

**Department of Commerce and Industry:** It controlled production, supply, prices, as well as weights and measures through its adhyakshas or market superintendents.

**Espionage department:** It consisted of gudhapurushas (secret agents) under the control of 'mahamatyapasarpa'. They correspond to the pativedakas and pulisanis of Ashokan edicts.

**Judicial department:** Kautilya refers to the existence of two kinds of courts – dharmasthiyas and

kantakasodhanas or civil and criminal courts. The supreme-court at the capital was presided over by the chief justice, called dharmadhakarin. There were also subordinate courts at the provincial capitals, divisions and districts.

**Police department:** Police headquarters were found in all principal centres. The jail proper called bandhangara was different from police lock-up called Charaka.

**Provincial and Local Administration:** Ashokan edicts talk about the division of the Mauryan empire into four provinces – Uttarapatha (Taxila), Avantipatha (Ujjain), Dakshinapatha (Suvarnagiri) and Kalinga (Tosali or Dhauli) each of which was under a viceroy-in-council. The council of ministers at the provincial level acted as a check on the power of Viceroy. The provinces were in turn divided into 'divisions' which were under 'pradeshtris' or 'pradesikas' who had no advisory councils. The divisions were in turn divided into 'districts' under officials called 'rajukas', whose position and functions are similar to those of a modern district collector. He was assisted by 'yuktas', subordinate officials doing Secretariat work and accounting. The districts were in turn divided into groups of 5 to 10 villages which were under 'Sthanikas' who were assisted by 'gopas'. The lowest rung in the administrative ladder was the village under the charge of a gramani, assisted by a council of elders in the administration of a village.

**Municipal Administration:** Kautilya clearly delineates the role of the nagarika or city superintendent. His chief duty was maintenance of law and order, but he also discharges some other duties. The nagarika was assisted by two officials as 'astyonomoi'. Megasthenes says that the Municipal Commission consisted of thirty members and was divided into six boards or committees of five members each.

## Mauryan Society

1. Megasthenes divided Indian society into seven classes comprising of the philosophers, agriculturists, soldiers, artisans, shepherds and hunters, officials in the government and spies. This division of society was according to the occupation pursued by the people.
2. Megasthenes refers to the general honesty of the people and says that theft was a rare occurrence. The code of punishment was severe mutilation for giving false evidence and death for injuring the royal artisan.
3. Megasthenes says that scarcity and famine were unknown to Indians but Kautilya talks about various famine relief measures to be taken by the state.
4. Megasthenes says that slavery was absent in India. But slavery did exist in India but its form was different from Europe. Kautilya mentions about nine categories of slaves and their rights.
5. There was a reduction in gap between the vaishyas and the Sudras, but there was no simultaneous improvement in the social status of Sudras, which caused social tensions finally leading to popularity of the heterodox sects. To overcome social tensions Ashoka laid emphasis on social harmony.
6. Though Brahmanical literature was particularly severe in the treatment of women, Buddhist and Jaina literature were more considerate. Megasthenes talks about the growing practice of polygamy; employment of women as palace guards, bodyguards to the king, spies etc. Thus, though the position of women was inferior to that of men, it was not as bad as it came to be in later periods such as the Gupta period.

## Mauryan Economy

1. The Arhashastra of Kautilya says that the state appointed 27 superintendents (adhyakshas) to regulate the economic activities of the state. They controlled and regulated agriculture, trade and commerce, weights and measures, crafts such as mining, weaving, spinning and so on.
2. The Mauryas seem to have owned large farms called 'Sita' which were worked under the

supervision of sitadhyaksha with the help of numerous slaves and hired labourers. The state farms were a source of royal income no less than the land cultivated by private individuals who paid taxes to the state.

3. The Maurya state itself also engaged in trade and commodity production. The state goods were to be normally sold by state servants but the assistance of private traders was also sought.
4. The Mauryan state had monopoly over mining and metallurgy, armaments, ship-building, coins and currency and salt making.
5. There seems to have been tapping of iron, gold, silver and copper mines by the state. The monopoly over the mines strengthened the power of the Mauryan government, particularly in view of the almost complete disarming of the rural population.
6. Apart from income from its own economic undertakings, a large number of taxes have been levied the chief among them being the land tax 'bhaga' which seemed to be levied at the rate of 1/6<sup>th</sup> of produce. Uda-bhaga was a cess on irrigation. Various other taxes such as customs and ferry charges were levied. Guilds of artisans living in the capital were also taxed. Kautilya also recommends several fiscal measures in emergency.
7. The Mauryan state founded new settlements and sought to rehabilitate the decaying ones by drafting surplus population from overpopulated regions. The Shudras for the first time were aided by the state in settling down as farmers in these settlements. Deportation of 1,50,000 people after the Kalinga war was apparently in keeping with the Mauryan policy of founding new settlements. The Sudras were granted fiscal exemption and supplied cattle, seeds and money initially in the hope of future repayments.
8. Large scale clearing of land by the state as well as the cultivation of the crown land under the direct supervision of its officers led to an unprecedented growth of settled agriculture, especially in the Gangetic valley.
9. The agricultural surplus led to growth of trade which was fostered by the development of the internal communication system. The rivers of north India provided easy internal transport. Peaceful relations with the Greeks under Bindusara and Ashoka gave a fillip to foreign trade with the west.
10. The use of currency which began in the pre-Mauryan period became a fairly common feature of the Mauryan period. Money was used not only for trade but the government paid its officers in cash. The largest number of punch-marked coins mostly of silver are from eastern U.P. and Bihar in the Mauryan age.
11. Northern black polished ware (NBPW) is the typical pottery of the Mauryan period, present even in the sites such as Mahasthangarh, Chandraketugarh.

## Ashoka's Dhamma

The policy of Dhamma was Ashoka's own invention. Although it may have been influenced by Hinduism and Buddhism, Ashoka's dhamma was neither a new religion nor a new political philosophy. Rather, it was a way of life, a code of conduct and a set of principles to be adopted and practiced by the people at large. Its contents were so broad and humanitarian that no cultural group or religious sect could object to its propagation by Ashoka. Though the concept of dhamma used in the sense of law and social order was not new to the ancient Indians, Ashoka gave a new meaning and significance to the concept by humanizing it. The code of ethics was both practical and convenient, as well as highly moral.

If his policy of dhamma had been merely a recording of Buddhist principles, Ashoka would have openly said so, since he never sought to hide his support for Buddhism. The Ashokan edicts were used to expound dhamma in its different aspects which clearly indicate that dhamma was a secular thing. From the major rock edicts, we can mention the following as the main features of the dhamma:

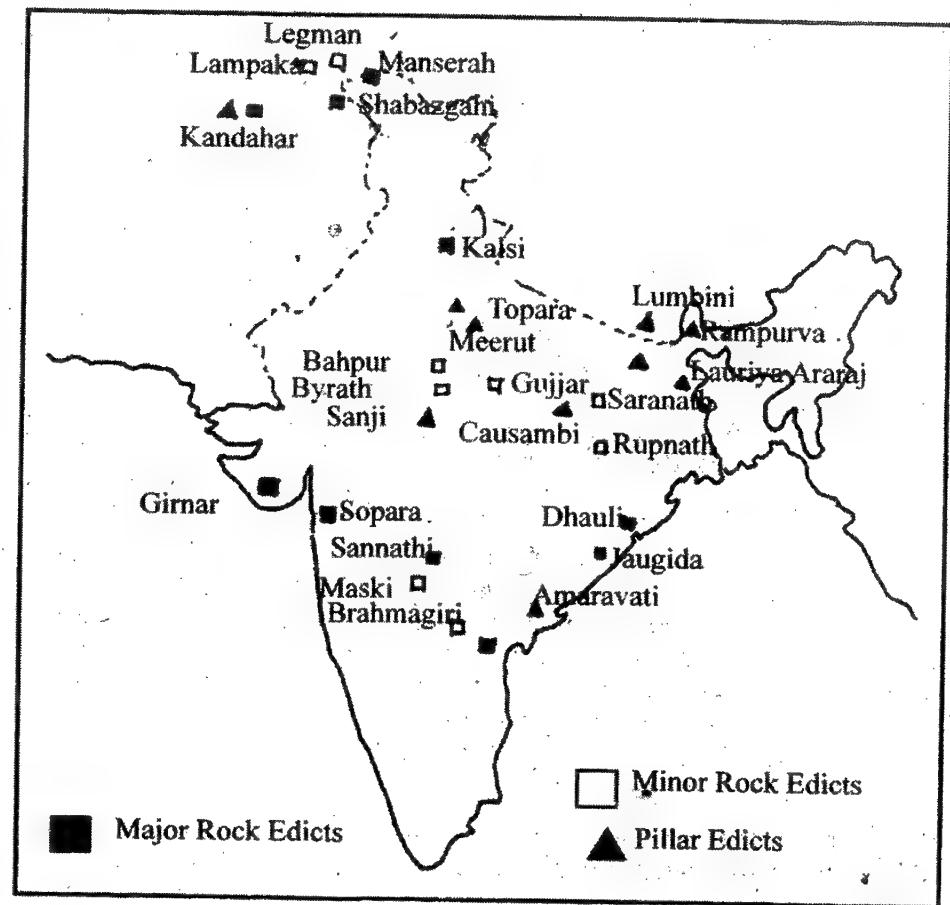
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Major Rock Edict I:	Prohibition of animal sacrifices and festivities.
Major Rock Edict II:	Administration directed towards social welfare
Major Rock Edict III:	Liberality to Brahmins, sramanas
Major Rock Edict IV:	Consideration and non-violence to animals and courtesy to relations
Major Rock Edict V:	Appointment of dhammadhammamattas entrusted with propagation of dhamma. Humane treatment of servants by masters and of prisoners by the government officials.
Major Rock Edict VI:	Efficient organisation of administration
Major Rock Edict VII:	Tolerance among all the sects.
Major Rock Edict VIII:	Maintenance of constant contact with the rural people through the system of 'dhammayatras'.
Major Rock Edict IX:	Avoiding expensive and meaningless ceremonies and rituals
Major Rock Edict XI:	Charity, kinship, dhamma
Major Rock Edict XII: Religious tolerance	
Major Rock Edict XIII:	Change of heart after Kalinga war and replacement of berighos (sound of war drums) by dhammagosha (sound of peace) signifying conquest through dhamma instead of through war.

### Mauryan Art and Architecture

Mauryan art is known for the diverse materials used in the constructions. Pre-Ashokan Mauryan art used wood and some other perishable materials. Ashoka started the general use of stone for monuments partly due to Achaemenid influence and partly due to denudation of forests.

**Pataliputra:** Arrian refers to the multiplicity of cities in the Mauryan empire. Megasthenes refers to the city of Pataliputra and says that it is nine-and-half miles in length and eleven miles in breadth. The roof and floor of the imperial palace were made of wood and pillars were the gupta period praises the



Mauryan edifices. The city of Pataliputra was surrounded by a big fortification wall made of wood surrounded by a ditch filled with water.

**Stupas:** Tradition has it that Ashoka constructed 84,000 stupas all over the empire and the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang is said to have reached a considerable number of these. The Sanchi stupa was constructed by Ashoka originally of bricks and wood. The Sanchi stupa was repaired during the times of the Sungas and a southern gateway to the Sanchi Stupa was constructed by the Satavahanas.

**Caves:** The rock-cut caves of the Mauryan period are the earliest examples of rock-cut architecture. The caves were to serve as residences for the monks and also served the purpose of Churches and assembly halls. These caves show a clear influence of wooden architecture on rock-cut architecture. Ashoka donated some caves such as Sudama caves and Lomas Rishi caves in the Barabar hills near Bodhgaya to the Ajivikas. Ashoka's grandson Dasaratha donated the Nagarjuna hill caves and Gopika caves to the Buddhists.

**Pillars:** The pillars set up by Ashoka furnish the finest, the most beautiful and characteristic specimens of the remains of the Mauryan art. These were placed either in sacred enclosures or in the vicinity of towns. The pillars are monolithic and are made of two types of stones-red and white sandstone from Mathura and buff-coloured hard sandstone quarried in Chunar near Benares. Each pillar has three-parts- the prop under the foundation, the shaft or the column and the capital. The capital itself consists of three items-finely executed one or more animal figures, the sacred dharmachakra (with 24 spokes) symbol engraved with animal sculptures in relief, and the inverted or bell-shaped lotus. The capital of Sarnath pillar is undoubtedly the most magnificent and the best piece of the series. The wonderful life-like figures of the four lions standing back to back, and the smaller graceful and stately figures of four animals (lion, elephant, bull and horse) in relief on the abacus, and the inverted lotus, all indicate a highly advanced form of art. The Indian government adopted this capital with some modifications as its state emblem.

### Independent Specimens of Art

Various pieces of art such as terracotta images have been found from Ahicchatra. Such images of mother goddess were very similar to those found from Harappa. Many images, toys, dice, ornaments and beads have been found from Taxila. Some images of animals have been found with elephant being the most popular. Maski was a famous bead making centre. Northern Black Polished ware is the typical pottery of the Mauryan period and is found from even areas such as Chandraketugarh in Bengal and Sisupalgarh in Orissa. In folk art various images of yakshas and yakshis.

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## CHAPTER - 7

### POST MAURYA PERIOD

#### Post Mauryan Period (200 BC to 300 AD)

The disintegration of the Mauryan empire led to various kingdoms such as those of the Indo-Greeks, Shakas, Parthians and Kushans in the north-western part of India; the rise of republican states in the Punjab; Nagas in ganga valley, Sungas and Kanvas with control over Pataliputra; the Chedis in Kalinga; the Satavahanas in the Deccan; and finally the struggle between the Cholas, Pandyas and Cheras down south. The Post-Mauryan age is characterised by the struggle for power among the various dynasties.

**The Indo-Greeks:** The Indo-Greeks were forced to invade Bacteria around 200 BC because of the pressure put on them by the Central Asian tribes such as the Shakas and the Kushanas. The Shakas and Kushanas, move to China because the Chinese emperor Shih Hung Ti built the Great Wall of China in 220 BC to counter to counter these invasions. Also, the successors of the Mauryas – the Sungas and the Kanvas were in no position to offer stiff resistance to the foreign invaders. The Greeks, thus pressed by the Central Asian tribes were forced to invade India.

Indo-Greeks ruled from three areas in India – one branch from Bactria (north Afghanistan), the second from Taxila and the third branch from Sakla (Sialkot). History of the Bactrian branch is not so relevant. Of the Indo-Greeks ruling from Taxila, the most important ruler was Antiacidas who sent his ambassador Heliodorus to the court of the Sunga ruler Kasiputra Bhagabhadra (Bhagavata) at Vidisha. Heliodorus constructed a pillar at Vidisha in honour of god of gods Vasudeva (Krishna) synonymous with Vishnu. This pillar is also known as Garudadhwaja or Besnagar Pillar Inscription. The third branch of the Indo-Greeks ruling from Sakala (Sialkot) belonged to the house of Euthedemus. Demetrius invaded India at the beginning of the reign of Pushyamitra Sunga and even reached Pataliputra. Menander was another important ruler of the house of Euthedemus. Menander was a follower of Mahayana Buddhism. The book Milindapanho written in 130 BC in Pali talks about the conversion of Menander (Milinda) to Buddhism by a monk named Nagasena.

#### Contribution of Indo-Greeks

1. The Indo-Greeks for the first time issued casted or moulded coins bearing images and inscriptions and also gold coins for the first time. They issued bilingual coinage with legends in Greek and Kharoshhti.
2. They promoted Indian religion and culture as is evident from the conversion of Heliodorus and Menander.
3. Indo-Greeks promoted Gandhara school of art in the north-west.
4. Indo-Greeks promoted growth of trade and commerce. The Indo-Greeks were good traders and were referred to as Yavana-gandhikas (foreign perfume dealers).
5. Indo-Greeks contributed to engineering through construction of canals and dams. They also contributed to the growth of medicine and astronomy.

**Shakas:** The Indo-Greeks were followed by the Shakas who belonged to the Central Asian tribe – the Scythians. There were five branches of the Shakas ruling from Afghanistan, Taxila, Mathura, Ujjain and Girnar. Sakas rules as Satraps (Kshatrapas) and mahasatraps (Mahakshatrapas) under the Kushana empire who ruled from Purushupur (Peshawar). The Shakas of Girnar and Ujjain after entered into conflict with the Satavahanas of the Deccan. The important Shaka rulers of Taxila are Maues (Moga), Azes I, Azilises and Azes II. The important Shaka rulers of Girnar are Bhumak and Nahapana. The Shakas of Girnar were called as Kshaharathas. The Shakas of Ujjain were called the Kardamakas. The

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important Shakas rulers of Girnar are Bhumak and Nahapana. The Shakas of Girnar were called as Kshaharathas. The important Shakas of Ujjain were Chastana, Jayadaman and Rudradaman I. Rudradaman I (130 – 150 AD) is famous for not only military conquests but also for his public works. Rudradaman repaired the famous Sudarshana lake. Rudradaman patronised Sanskrit and issued the first ever long inscription in chaste Sanskrit.

**Parthians:** They were also called as Pahlavas. They originally lived in northern Iran, they replaced the Shakas in north-western India, but controlled an area much smaller than that controlled by either the Shakas or the Indo-Greeks. Mithrodates II was the first ruler who established a Parthian presence in India. Gondophernes who ruled from 19-45 AD was the greatest Indo-Parthian monarch who had control over Peshawar district. St. Thomas is said to have come to India to propagate Christianity during the reign of Gondophernes. After Gondophernes death, the Parthians broke up and the Kushanas moved in.

**Kushanas:** The Parthians were followed by the Kushanas, who were also called Yeuchs or Tocharians. The Kushanas were one of the five clans into which the Yeuchi tribe was divided. The Kushanas ruled over an extensive empire which stretched from Khurasan in Central Asia to Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh. Although the gold coins of the Kushanas are found mainly west of the Indus, their inscriptions are distributed not only in the north-western India and Sindh but also in Mathura, Shravasti, Kaushambi and Varanasi. Kushana coins, inscriptions, constructions and pieces of sculptures found in Mathura show that it was their second capital in India.

**Kajula Kadphises (15-64 AD):** He was the first Kushana ruler to use imperial titles.

**Wema Kadphises (Kadphises II) (64 – 78 AD):** He was the first Kushana ruler to introduce gold coins on a significant scale. He was a devotee of Shiva and called himself as 'Maheswarasya' and issued coins with the symbols of Shiva, Nandi, and the Trident.

**Kanishka:** He was the greatest Kushana ruler and founded the Shaka era of 78 AD. He ruled over extensive territories from Central Asia to Varanasi. He extended his control over many satraps and mahasatrapas ruling over territories under him. He is said to have suffered defeat at the hands of the Chinese general Pan Chao. The achievements of Kanishka are recorded in Sarnath inscriptions. According to Buddhist tradition, Kanishka is said to have launched an expedition to Pataliputra where he picked up the famous Buddhist scholar Asvagosha. Kanishka held the 4<sup>th</sup> Buddhist council at Kundalavana Vihar in Kashmir on the advice of Parsva. Images of Kanishka which are headless are found in Mathura. Kanishka also patronised Gandhara School of Art. The Kushanas contributed to the growth of trade and commerce and called themselves as good horse dealers. Kushanas issued the largest number of gold coins upto that period. Kushanas issued standard gold coins. Kushanas' standard gold coins were made on the basis of gold imported from Roman empire as well as from the Central Asian gold mines. Kushanas rarely issued silver coins. Kushanas issued the largest number of copper coins which meant that currency was used by the common man. Saddle for horse riding was introduced by the Kushanas. The Shakas and the Kushanas introduced turban, tunic, trousers and heavy long coat. The Kushanas were in course of time assimilated into Indian society so much so that the last Kushana king was called Vasudeva.

### Divine theory of kingship:

Like the Chinese, Parthians and Romans, the Kushans propagated the concept of divine kingship. They used the title devaputra (the son of god). In fact they were officially known as devaputras (sons of god).

Sometimes, after the Parthian and Roman fashion, they would like to be called 'god living in the form of man'. The Kushana royal statues found at a temple at Mat and in the sanctuaries of Swat region and Surkh-Kotal show unmistakably that Kushan kings were worshipped as divinities. Since the concept of divine origin of kingship was propagated by all the contemporary powers of the time, and as the Kushans had relations with all of them, it is not difficult to suggest that their divine origin theory might have been inspired by the reference political culture of the time.

Besides assuming divine position, the Kushans from Vima onwards assumed high standing titles namely; Maharaja, Rajatiraja, Sarvaloga-I svara, Mahisvara, Basileus Basileon and Shaonano Shao. Kanishka II was even described as Kaisara after Roman title Caesar. By appropriating these titles, the Kushans clearly conveyed their supreme might to create a 'favourable' mass mentality.

The Kushanas at times followed the practice of conjoint rule as we find sometimes the heir-apparent associated with the royal administration. The tradition had precedents in India; and it was also practiced by the Scythians, Parthian and the Romans. The co-ruler was in all probability an adjutant rather than a full partner. Evidently the Kushan political and administrative structure was headed by a near absolute military monarchy.

**Republican States in the Punjab:** The political vacuum in the Punjab created by the dissolution of the Mauryan empire was effectively filled by the rise of republican states (not monarchies). Some of the republican states were Arjunayanas, Yaudheyas, Agastyas, Audambaras, Kunindas and the Trigarthas.

1. Arjunayanas – ruled between Agra and Jaipur.
2. Yaudheyas – ruled between Sutlej and Yamuna. They issued Kartikeya or Brahmanyā type of coins.
3. Agastyas – ruled over the territory immediately west of the yaudheyas.
4. Audumbaras – ruled between the Beas and Ravi rivers. They issued Mahadev type of coins.
5. Kunindas – ruled between the Sutlej and Yamuna and issued Chatreswara type of coins dedicated to Lord Shiva.
6. Trigarthas – ruled between Ravi and Sutlej rivers.

Many of these republican states existed well into the Gupta period and some of them were extinguished by Samudragupta.

**Sungas:** Pushyamitra Sunga, the Brahmin commander-in-chief of last Mauryan ruler Brihadratha assassinated him and founded the Sunga dynasty. Pushyamitra Sunga faced two invasions from the Indo-Greeks, one in the earlier part of his reign and another in the later part of his reign. Pushyamitra Sunga upheld the Brahmanical religion and culture and performed two Asvamedha sacrifices according to Ayodhya inscription. He also patronised Patanjali, the author of Mahabhsya. Pushyamitra is said to have suppressed Buddhism. However, Sanchi Stupa was repaired in the time of the Sungas and Bharhut Stupa was constructed fully in this period. The Sangas ruled from Pataliputra and Vidisha. Agnimitra, the son and successor of Pushyamitra was the hero of Kalidasa's Malvikagnimitram. Bhagavata or Bhagabhadra – penultimate Sunga is mentioned in Besnagar inscription of Heliodorus, the ambassador of Antiacidas who was the Indo-Greek ruler of Taxila. Heliodorus constructed a pillar at Vidisha in honour of god of gods Vasudeva (Krishna) synonymous with Vishnu. This pillar is also known as Garudadhwaja. The last Sunga ruler Devabhuti was assassinated by his minister Vasudeva who founded the Kanvas dynasty.

**Kanvas:** Vasudeva was the founder of the Kanvas dynasty with capital at Pataliputra, Susaraman was the last Kanvas ruler who was killed by one of the Satavahanas; their decline being due to the expansion of the Satavahanas in the Deccan and the foreign dynasties in north India.

**Nagas of Ganga Valley:** They were small kingdom confined to the Ganga valley. They were known to possess huge amounts of wealth and performed brahmanical sacrifices to uphold their own importance in Indian society.

**Chetas (Chedis):** The Cheta dynasty was founded by Mahameghavarman. The greatest ruler of this dynasty was Kharvela of Kalinga who rose to prominence in the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC. The achievements of Kharvela are given in detail in the Hathigumpha inscription written in Prakrit language and Brahmi script. Kharvela patronised Jainism. In a later expedition to Magadha, Kharvela is said to have defeated a ruler called Bahasatmitra, captured the fortress of Garathgiri and brought back an

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image of a Jain tirthankara to Kalinga. He is also said to have defeated a confederacy of south Indian rulers headed by Pandavas. Kharvela also donated Hathigumpha and Ranigumpha caves in Orissa to Jain monks. Kharvela also constructed many tanks and canals. We have no account of Chetas after Kharvela.

**Satavahanas:** The Satavahanas ruled for a period of 460 years in the Deccan. The credit of establishing the first empire in South India goes to the Satavahanas. Andhra is both a tribal as well as a territorial name. In the Ashokan inscriptions, the Andras are mentioned as border people. Telangana in modern Andhra Pradesh was the nucleus of the Satavahana empire. Satavahanas is a Prakrit form of 'Satavahanas' which means the solar origin of the dynasty. The title 'Satkarni' is borne by the Satavahanas. They were looked upon by some as Brahmins.

**Simuka:** He was the founder of the Satavahana empire with capital at Pratishtan (Paithan). Though he followed Brahmanism, he was liberal to the Buddhists and Jainas.

**Kanha (Krishna):** He was the younger brother and successor of Simuka. He extended the kingdom upto Nasik in the west.

**Satkarni-I:** He was Simuka's son. Nanaghat inscription inscribed by his wife Nayamika (Nagamika) refers to Satkarni I as 'Dakshinapathapathi'. The inscription mentions the regions under Satkarani I as Akara (Upper Narmada valley), Anupa (lower Narmada Valley), Anartha (Vidarbha), Aparanta (upper Konkan coast), Saurashtra, Kuccha (Kutch), Malva, Maru (desert area of Rajasthan). Satkarani I performed some Vedic sacrifices including 'asvamedha' and 'rajasuya'. The next 100 years was a dark phase in Satavahana history.

**Hala:** He was the 17<sup>th</sup> ruler who ruled from 20-24 AD. Hala himself composed Gathasapatasati (Sattasi), an anthology of 700 erotic verses in Maharashtri or Paisachi Prakrit.

**Gautamiputra Satkarni:** He was the next important ruler. He was the first Satavahana to have a metronymic name. He is considered to be the greatest Satavahana ruler. Nasik inscription inscribed by his mother Gautami Balasri records the achievements of Gautamiputra Satkarni and says that his son's horse drunk the water of the three seas. He is said to have defeated the Saka ruler of Girnar, Nahapana and regained many lost territories. To the Buddhists as well as the Brahmins, he made large donations. His patronage of Brahmanism is revealed by the epithet 'Ekabrahmana'.

**Vasishthaputra Pulamayi I:** He is said to have extended the power upto the mouth of the river Krishna. He issued special type of coins showing a ship with double mast found in the Coromandel coast. During his reign, the old stupa at Amaravati was repaired, enlarged and encased in richly sculptured marble slabs.

**Vasishthaputra Sri Satkarni:** He married the daughter of Rudradaman, the Shaka ruler of Ujjain but the Saka- Satavahana conflict continued unabated.

**Yajnasri Satkarni:** He is the last great ruler of the Satavahanas. He regained much of the area which had been lost to the Shakes. He issued coins bearing fish symbol, boat symbol and a Chaitya symbol. Such coins are known as Ujjain type of coins. He successfully terminated hostilities with the Shakes. Yajnasri Satkarni was the contemporary of the Mahayana Buddhist monk Nagarjuna.

**Pulamayi IV:** He was the last Satavahana ruler.

The decline of the Satavahana empire led to the division of the empire among five minor dynasties. The northern provinces came under the sway of a collateral branch of the Satavahanas. In the west, the Abhiras established themselves around Nasik; the Ikshvakus carved out for themselves a kingdom in the eastern region in the Krishna-Guntar area; the Chutus controlled the far-flung areas of the South-Western parts; and the Pallavas filled the political vacuum in the South-Eastern tracts.

### Satavahana caves inscriptions

The major phase of Buddhist cave architecture belongs to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> C CE. Some caves were

directly connected with the patronage of Satavahana. The Satavahana rulers took interest in building caves, viharas or monasteries, chaityas or large halls with a number of columns and stupas.

Most of the rock caves in the Deccan were cut during this period.

**Chaitya & Vihara:** Chaitya was a large hall with a number of columns. The Viharas were meant as places of residence for the monks. The Vihara had a central Hall. One could enter this hall by a doorway from a verandah in front.

**Chaitya of Karle:** The Chaitya of Karle was most famous. It is 40 metres long, 15 metres wide and 15 metres high. It has rows of 15 columns on each side. Each of these columns is built on a stair like square plinth. Each pillar has a capital figure of an elephant, a horse or a rider on the top. The roof-tops are also decorated with elegant carvings.

**Nashik:** At Nashik, there are three Viharas carrying the inscriptions of Gautamiputra and Nahapana. The most famous of these monuments are the stupas. Among them the Amravati Stupa and the Nagarjunakonda Stupa are most famous.

The stupa was a large round structure built over some relic of the Buddha. The Amravati Stupa measures 162 metres across the base and its height is 100 feet. Both these stupas are full of sculptures. The Nagarjunakonda town contains not only the Buddhist monuments but also some ancient Hindu brick temples.

Vihara 3 at Nashik is known as the Gautamiputra Cave as it has inscriptions belonging to the time of this Satavahana king.

### Significance of the Satavahana rule:

1. The Satavahanas established the first empire in South India and defended it from invasions of the foreigners such as the Shakas. They provided a sound administration and ruled according to the laws of Dharmasastras.
2. The taxation system of the Satavahanas was liberal and it did not put heavy financial burden on the subjects.
3. Satavahanas contributed to the growth of trade and commerce. They patronised Buddhist and Jain traders inspite of the Satavahanas themselves being Brahmins. They had many ports on the west coast such as Bharuch, Sopara, Kalyana on the west coast. Ports such as Amaravati, Ghantasala, Goli were situated on the east coast. There were no restrictions on foreign travel.
4. Satavahanas contributed to the growth of currency and coinage. They issued many coins in various denominations in gold, silver, copper, lead, potene.
5. Women commanded good respect in the society which is clear from the fact that Satavahanas rulers included the names of their mothers along with theirs. Women participated in administration also. The widow of Gautamiputra Satkarni looked after the administration of the state as guardian of her sons.
6. Not only inter-caste marriages were prevalent but marriages with foreigners were also permitted. Satavahana rulers themselves had entered into matrimonial relations with the Shakas of Ujjain.
7. Satavahanas contributed to the growth of art in the hills of western ghats. The famous centres of art such as Nasik, Karle, Bhaja, Kondain, Kanheri, Ajanta flourished under them. Many chaityas and Viharas were constructed. Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda were great centres of art patronised by Satavahanas as well as their successors in the region, Ikshvakus. Ajanta frescoes made their beginning in this period. Ajanta paintings are known for their rich colour combination the drawing of clear unblemished figures, their expression of emotions and their Buddhist themes.

8. Satavahanas contributed to the growth of Prakrit language. Hala, the Satavahana ruler wrote Gatasaptasati (Sattasi) a poem having 700 couplets in Prakrit. Satavahanas also issued inscriptions in Prakrit.
9. Satavahanas constructed the southern gateway of Sanchi Stupa.
10. Satavahanas contributed to the growth of Brahmanical religion and culture but were not hostile to Buddhism and Jainism.

## RELIGION

### Buddhism

1. In the post-Maurya period, the rich and the powerful supported Buddhism. The monasteries received huge donations and the Buddhist order became respected. Buddhists sent various missions to the parts of India and to outside.
2. During the process of proselytizing, Buddhism also began to receive new ideas which led to reinterpretations of the doctrine until finally there were major difference of opinion and the religion was split into two main sects.
3. The Buddhist monks built their monastic refectories on some secluded hill-side. Thus the Buddhist order tended to move away from the common people and isolate itself. This in turn diminished much of its religious strength. The schism and the growing tendency to live off the affluent section of society bred the seeds of decay in Buddhism.
4. The Mahayana doctrine originated in Andhra and Nagarjuna was its most outstanding exponent. The essential features of Mahayanism were the concept of the Bodhisattva, deification of the Buddha and adoption of image-worship and puja-rituals.
5. The Hinayanists were the orthodox Buddhists who followed the original doctrine of Buddhism. They also worshipped the Buddha but through symbols like the Bodhi tree, Dharmachakra, stupa etc. The Hinayanists regarded the Salvation of the individual as the good unlike the Mahayanists who believed in the salvation of all begins. The Hinayanists continued the Pali canon whereas the Mahayanists adopted Sanskrit as the language of the sacred literature and developed a new canon.

### Brahmanas

1. Some of the Vedic gods had passed into oblivion, some others were reborn as new gods with additional attributes. It was during this period that Brahmanical religion assumed features which today are recognized as Hinduism.
2. The successful attack launched by the heretical sects on Vedic sacrifices and Vedic God strengthened the trend of monotheistic thinking among the brahmanas. This concept also led to the idea of Trinity of Gods- Brahma, Vishnu, mahesvara.
3. Animals, trees, mountains and rivers were held sacred. The cow was regularly worshipped. The bull and snake were centres of fertility rites.
4. There was also a gradual shift in emphasis from ritual alone to personal devotion between God and the devotee (bhakti).
5. Vedic sacrifices still provided the ceremonial contest of certain occasions like coronation of Kings. People lost touch with Vedic tradition which increasingly became the preserve of the Brahmanas. As the Brahmanas appropriated the Vedic texts, the people accepted the Epics in their place. The epic heroes Rama, Krishna and others became the incarnations of Vishnu. The epics were now given the sanctity of divine revelation. They were revised suitably with a view to using them as religious literature. Thus many interpolations were made, the most important being the 'Bhagavad Gita'.

6. The doctrines of Karma and Transmigration formed the central features of the Hindu belief at that time. They stressed that actions in the present life conditioned the next birth; one could consciously perform good actions and can modify his destiny. The morality of an action was dependent on its conformity with dharma. The Gita proclaims that each man must do his duty and act according to the sacred law without questioning the results of his action.

**Jainism:** By and large Jainism remained more faithful to its original teachings. It maintained itself as a parish religion with more determination than Buddhism. This is one of the reasons why the number of its followers has remained fairly constant.

**Christianity:** Christianity entered India during the first century AD by way of the trading Ships from the west. The coming of Christianity is associated with the legend of St. Thomas who is said to have come twice on missions to India.

### Social Structure

1. The most outstanding feature of the social order during 200 BC to 300 AD was that the traditional Indian social order, based on Varna was being threatened by the influx of foreigners such as Greeks, Shakas, Parthians, Kushanas and the foreigners called Yavanas in the south. The presence of foreigners in India in such large numbers posed a threat to the caste system. The Brahmanas gave them the position of fallen Kshatriyas. The absorption of foreigners into Indian society was made easy through their adoption of Buddhism, which did not raise difficulties as to caste.
2. Social laws were becoming rigid. Manusmriti was composed in 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.
3. Varna system existed in theory only. Though claims were made to defend country, religion and Brahmins from foreigners and to put an end to Varnasamkara, but these were hollow claims as a Satavahana ruler Vashistaputra Sri Satakarni had no objection to marrying the daughter of Rudradaman.
4. Brahmins continued to corner many privileges. Brahmin scholars were inimical to trading and banking. As a result, these sections supported Jainism and Mahayana Buddhism.
5. Increased commercial activity during this period led to the growth of money economy which in turn led to a proliferation of arts and crafts. Artisans and craftsmen were largely drawn in this period from the Sudras who gained in wealth and status on account of the progress of arts and commerce. The economic distinctions between the Vaishyas and the Sudras therefore tended to be blurred. But many Sudras continued to be employed as hired labourers and slaves.
6. Education was treated as the prerogative of the upper castes. The Brahmanas had access to all knowledge. The kshatriyas and the Vaishyas were expected to reconcile themselves to limited knowledge. The possibility of education for the Sudra existed. But reference to it is extremely infrequent.
7. The position of women in Hinduism was low, though Manu gave them right over Stridhana. There are references to Sati in Ramayana and Mahabharata. Among the Buddhists, Jainas and foreigners, the position of women was relatively better.
8. Untouchability continued. Slaves continued to be imported from Zanzibar and Madagascar.
9. Urban life was well developed. Urban centres were inhabited by well to do's. They enjoyed luxurious wealthy life.

### Economy

1. Great expansion of agriculture is witnessed in the Post-Mauryan age because of the large scale use of Iron. Surplus was produced in agriculture. A number of agricultural products were exported, which must have given a general boost to areas cultivating these groups.

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2. Many historians consider the Post-Mauryan age as the 'Mercantile Age of India' because of the thriving trade that was carried on during this period.
3. An Extra-ordinary expansion and elaboration of trading activities and a corresponding increase in the range of exports and imports.
4. There was opening up of the remote parts of the country and the discovery of new channels of communication. There was discovery by HIPPALUS of the 'Monsoon route' to India from, West Asia in 46 AD and the establishment of the 'Silk Route' from China to Europe through India and sea-route to South-East Asia from India.
5. There was increasing organisation of trade through guilds, increased monetisation of trade with the increase in the number of coins etc
6. Trade seems to have been conducted in the luxury items and not in necessary items.
7. Favourable balance of trade for India as is evident from the complaints of Roman writers like Pliny that gold was flowing out of their country to India.
8. Arts and Crafts made much progress and there seems to be a significant advancement of technology and consequent improvement in the general standard of goods produced.
9. Pearls were exported from the port of Korkai (Colchoi) in Pandyan Kingdom.
10. Spices were exported from Malabar in Chera Kingdom. Black pepper was also known as yavanapriya because the yavanas were fond of it. So black pepper was known as black gold.
11. Cutlery items made of iron were important exports to the Roman world. Leather goods and Indian muslin cloths were also exported to the Roman empire, so much so that Pliny suggested that ban should be imposed on Indian cutlery items and muslin so as to prevent the flow of gold to India.
12. Pratishtan and Amaravati were cotton producing centres. Salaka was a type of cloth produced from Mathura. Mathuram was a type of cloth produced in Madurai.
13. Chinese silk was imported and converted into cloth called Chinapatta or Chinesuka.
14. Nattamedu in Tamil Nadu was a glass bead making centre.
15. Slaves, gold, silver, copper, coral, high class pottery were imported.
16. Slaves were imported from Zanzibar and Madagascar.
17. Highest class of Roman pottery called Arrentine or Terra sigliata has been found from South India. Olive oil was stored in these vessels.
18. Roulette pottery was also another type of pottery imported from Rome found on a larger scale than Arrentine on the east coast of India.
19. Ivory was imported from Ethiopia.
20. Horses were imported from Central Asia and West Asia.
21. Indians also imported gold, silver, copper, tin and spices from Indonesia.
22. A Brahmin named kaundinya founded his own dynasty in Cambodia by marrying a local princess.
23. Roman gold coins were called as 'Aurius' while the terms for silver coins were 'Denarius' and 'Solidus'.
24. The flourishing trade led to interaction between not only different Indian cultures but also Indian and foreign cultures, leading to their synthesis. We hear of voyages of daring merchants to Malay peninsula (Suvarnabhumi), Indonesia (Suvaranadvipa), Cambodia (Kambuja), and Annam (Champa). Indians regularly visited the ports of Saudi Arabia and East Africa. We also hear of Yavana settlements in India, more so in the south as in Muziris, Arikamedu, Kaveripattinam etc.

than in the north. All this led to spread of Indian culture to South-East Asia, Central Asia and West Asia and also the Indian culture was in turn influenced by the culture of these areas.

25. Ports had many names. The port of Bharuch was also called as Broach, Bharukachcha, Barygaza or Brigakachchu. Sopara was also called as Supparika. Kalyana was called as Kalliena. Arikamadu was also called as Poduca; korkai as Kolchoi; Masulipatnam as Mosalia; Uraiur as argaru; Tyndis as Ponnani; Muziris as Cranganore; Naura as Cannanore; Kaveripattinam as Puhar.

### **Post-Mauryan Art and Architecture**

1. It was reflective of new tendencies. The place of wood and bricks was taken by slate, sandstone, marble.
2. Sanchi Stupa wooden railings were replaced with stone railings by the Sungas and the Satavahanas built the southern gateway of Sanchi Stupa. The Bharhut Stupa in Central Asia was constructed in the Post-Mauryan age.
3. For the first time we get evidence of paintings in Ajanta caves. Paintings were characterised by good colour contrasts, clear drawing of figures from the themes of Buddha's life and for expression of emotions. Floral designs were used to decorate ceilings of caves.
4. Many chatiyas and Viharas were constructed in the hills of eastern ghats and western ghats. Kharvela donated Hathigumpa and Ranigumpa caves to Jain monks. Ranigumpa is the biggest cave, its two storied, its constructed in an elongated rectangular pattern. Many caves were cut in Nasik, Bhaja, Kondaine, Ajanta, Karle, Kancheri.
5. Karle Chatiya is the biggest and is constructed on an elongated rectangular pattern with a curved roof. The Chaitya of Bhaja was circular, having a curved roof.
6. Art was influenced both by religion and by secular ideas. Themes of Mahayana Buddhism were represented in art. Images of Buddha and Budhisattvas were constructed on a large scale. Three prominent schools of art were Gandhara school of art, Mathura school of art and Amaravati school of art.

### **Gandhara School of Art**

1. It was based on intermixing of diverse art traditions such as Persian, Greco-Roman and Indian.
2. It flourished in Afghanistan and North-Western India with prominent centres at Taxila, Peshawar, Begram, Bamiyan from 1<sup>st</sup> Century BC to 4<sup>th</sup> Century AD.
3. Inspiration was Buddhism and so Chaityas, Viharas and stupas were created mostly by Indians though foreign influence was seen. Many images were also constructed.
4. Use of black stone for images
5. Images in Gandhara art were realistic and look like the figures of common people. So though images are technically perfect they do not reflect spiritualism.
6. Images of Buddha had halo round the head indicating Greco-Roman influence. Images had wavy hair, lines on forehead, wrinkles on face, ornaments around the neck, muscular body and transparent garments.
7. Images of Greek gods such as Apollo and images of Greek kings were also constructed.

### **Mathura School of Art:**

1. It was based on indigenous art tradition but with Mathura city coming under foreigners, it yielded to foreign influence.
2. This school of art flourished in Mathura in Uttar Pradesh. The school began in the middle of 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC but genuine progress only in 1<sup>st</sup> century AD

3. Use of spotted red sandstone for images.
4. This school responsible for the first images of Buddha seen. The images of Buddha were its most significant contribution and was later adopted by Gandhara school of art as well.
5. Various cross-logged images of Jain tirthankars are also seen from Mathura school of art.
6. Images of Hindu gods and goddesses such as Vishnu, Laxmi, Shiva, Parvati, Kuber are seen although they were not constructed in correct proportions, a defect which was rectified in the Gupta age.
7. Headless images of Kanishka, the Kushana emperor recovered from Mathura. This image had long coat and tight trousers.

## Amaravati School of Art

1. Also known as the Vengi school of art, it flourished in the lower valleys of Krishna-Godavari region with Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda emerging as its two most important centres.
2. Patronage was provided by the Satavahanas and Ikshvakus.
3. The chief inspiration was Mahayana Buddhism. Marble stone was used.
4. The stupa of Amaravati was constructed with marble. Its railings were also decorated with themes from life of the Buddha. Its gateway is decorated with images of lions. Buddha's body is depicted in very thin and slender form, even ribs of Buddha are visible.
5. Stupa of Nagarjunakonda was concentric in form. There were two domes, one dome was constructed within the other. Domes were properly decorated with use of colour tiles.
6. Amaravati school of art is naturalistic and sensors. Female figurines in different positions are its best creation. Feminine beauty is better depicted at Amaravati than at Mathura.
7. This school of art exerted great influence on the later South-Indian sculpture and its products influenced Ceylon and even South-East Asia.

## Sangam Age

The southern end of the Indian peninsula situated south of the Krishna river was divided into three kingdoms – Chola, Pandya and Cheras. The Pandyas are first mentioned by Megasthenes, who says that their kingdom was celebrated for pearls. He also speaks of its being ruled by a woman, which may suggest some matriarchal influence in the Pandya society.

**Pandyas:** The Pandya territory occupied the southern-most and the south-eastern portion of the Indian peninsula, and it roughly included the modern districts of Tirunelveli, Ramnad and Madurai in Tamil Nadu. It had its capital at Madurai. The literature compiled in the Tamil academies in the early centuries of the Christian era and called the Sangam literature refers to the Pandya rulers. The Pandyan country was wealthy and prosperous as they profited from trade with Roman empire and even sent embassies to the Roman emperor Augustus.

**Cholas:** The Chola kingdom which came to be called Cholamandalam (Coromandel) in early medieval times was situated to the north-east of the territory of the Pandyas, between the Pennar and the Velar rivers. We have some idea of the political history of the Cholas from the Sangam texts. Their chief centre of political power lay at Uraiur, a place famous for cotton trade. It seems that in the middle of the second century BC, a Chola King named Elara conquered Sri Lanka and ruled it for nearly 50 years. A firmer history of the Cholas begins in the second century AD with their famous king Karikala. He founded Puhar and constructed 160 km of embankment along the Kaveri river. This was built with the labour of 12,000 slaves from Sri Lanka. Puhar is identical with Kaveripatnam, which was the Chola capital. It was a centre of trade and commerce and excavations show that it had a large dock. One of the main sources of the wealth of the Cholas was trade in cotton cloth. The Cholas maintained an efficient navy.

Under Karikala's successors the Chola power rapidly declined. Their capital, Kaveripattanam, was overwhelmed and destroyed. Their two neighbouring powers, the Cheras and the Pandyas, extended at the cost of the Cholas. What remained of the Chola power was almost wiped out by the attacks of the Pallavas from the north. From the fourth to the ninth century AD the Cholas played only a marginal part in South Indian history.

**Cheras:** The Chera or the Kerala country was situated to the west and north of the land of the Pandyas. It included the narrow strip of land between the sea and the mountains and covered portions of both Kerala and Tamil Nadu. In the early centuries of the Christian era, the Chera country was as important as the country of the Cholas and the Pandyas. It owned its regiments at Muziris identical with Cranganore in the Chera country to protect their interest. It is said that they also built there a temple of Augustus.

The history of the Cheras was marked by a continuous fight with the Cholas and the Pandyas. Although the Cheras killed the father of Chola king Karikala, the Chera king also lost his life. Later the two kingdoms temporarily became friends and concluded a matrimonial alliance. The Chera king next allied himself with the Pandya rulers against the Cholas. But the Cholas defeated the allies, and it is said that since the Chera King was wounded in the back he committed suicide out of shame.

According to the Chera poets, their greatest king was Senguttuvan, the Red or Good Chera. He routed his rivals and established his cousin securely on the throne. It is said that he invaded the north and crossed the Ganga. But all this seems to be exaggerated. After the second century AD the Chera power declined, and we know nothing of its history until the eighth century AD.

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## CHAPTER - 8

### GUPTA PERIOD

#### Gupta Empire

The rise of the Guptas was due to many advantages enjoyed by them;

1. Centre of their operations lay in the fertile land of Madhyadesa covering Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.
2. They could exploit the iron ores of Central India and South Bihar.
3. They took advantage of their proximity of the areas of north India which carried on a prosperous silk trade with the Byzantine empire.
4. Being feudatories of the Kushanas at one time, they learnt from the Kushanas, the use of Saddle, reins etc. these gave them mobility and made them excellent horsemen. The basic strength of the Guptas lay in the use of horses.
5. They had excellent leaders like Chandragupta I, Samudragupta, Chandragupta II.
6. They skilfully used matrimonial alliances to consolidate their power.

**Srigupta:** The Gupta dynasty was founded by Srigupta in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. He used the title of Maharaja.

**Gatotkacha Gupta:** He succeeded Srigupta. He also took the title of Maharaja.

**Chandragupta-I (319-334 AD):** He is the first important king of the Gupta dynasty and took the title of Maharajadhiraja. He married a Lichchhavi princess from Nepal called Kumaradevi and issued Kumaradevi type of coins. The Guptas were possibly vaishyas, and hence married a kshatriya princess and started the Gupta era in 319-320 AD.

**Samudragupta (335-380 AD):** Samudragupta ascended the throne after subduing Kachagupta who called himself as Sarvarajochchetta on his coins. The achievements of Samudragupta are known from Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta authored by Harisena engraved on the same pillar which carries the inscription of Ashoka. In this pillar inscription Samudragupta called himself as Lichchhavi-dauhitra. His military exploits according to Allahabad pillar inscription include,

1. Samudragupta first defeated the nine rulers of Aryavartha in the region of Ganga-Yamuna doab and annexed these kingdoms to his empire.
2. Samudragupta then defeated the five frontier states in Bengal, Assam, Nepal and also defeated the republican states in Punjab.
3. Samudragupta then brought under control the Atavika rajyas which are the forest kingdoms situated in the Vindhya region.
4. Samudragupta then defeated the Sakas and the Kushanas. Meghavarman, the ruler of Sri Lanka sought permission from Samudragupta to built a Buddhist temple at Gaya. On the basis of his conquests Samudragupta called himself as Parakramana and is also referred to as the Napoleon of India. Samudragupta also performed an Asvamedha sacrifice and issued coins bearing the horse of Asvamedha sacrifice. He is mentioned as a great musician and issued coins of vena type. He is also mentioned as Kaviraja. Samudragupta was a devotee of Vishnu.

**Chandragupta-II (380-414 AD):** Chandragupta-II was a master strategist. He married Kuberanaga, a princess of Nagas of the Ganga-Yamuna doab and Prabhavatigupta was his daughter from Kuberanaga. This made the Nagas the allies of the gupta in their neighbourhood. The main achievement of Chandragupta II was to destroy the power of the Shamas. This he did by giving his daughter Prabhavatigupta in marriage to the Vakataka crown-prince Rudrasena II, and by allying with the Vakatakas he destroyed the last Shaka ruler Rudrasimha III. The victory over the Shamas gave

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Chandragupta II control over Malwa and Gujarat with access to the western sea coast famous for trade and Commerce. This contributed to the prosperity of Malwa and its chief city Ujjain which seems to have been made the second capital by Chandragupta II. Prabhavatigupta who later became the virtual ruler of Vakatakas after the death of her husband also seemed to have promoted the interests of her Chandragupta II. Chandragupta II is equated with Chandra, the king mentioned in Mehrauli iron pillar inscription who is said to have ruled area between Bengal and north- western India. Chandragupta II adopted the title of Vikramaditya, which had first been used by an Ujjain ruler in 57 BC as a mark of victory over the Shaka kshatrapas of western India. The court of Chandragupta II at Ujjain was adorned by numerous scholars including Kalidas and Amarashinha. It was in Chandragupta's time that the Chinese pilgrim Fa-hsien visited India and wrote an elaborate account of the life of its people.

**Kumaragupta-I (414-455 AD):** Most of his reign was peaceful and prosperous but towards the end of his reign the Hunas invaded India from the north-west. But his son Skandagupta managed to defeat the Hunas as is mentioned in Bhitari inscription and Junagarh inscription of Skandagupta. Kumaragupta I is said to have founded Nalanda University.

**Skandagupta (455-467 AD):** He resisted the onslaught of the Hunas. He also repaired the Junagarh lake in Gujarat. But successors of Skandagupta were weak and incompetent and led to the dissolution of the Gupta empire. Vishnugupta was the last gupta emperor.

The reasons for the fall of the Gupta empire are:

1. The fall of the Gupta empire was partly due to Huna invasion. The Hunas excelled in horsemanship and archery and possibly used stirrups made up of metal.
2. The weak successors of Skandagupta could not cope up with the Huna invaders.
3. The Huna occupation of Malwa and a good portion of central India had drastically reduced the extent of the Gupta empire.
4. The rise of feudatories who proclaimed independence such as the Maukhari of Kannauj and later Gupta of Magadha further undermined the Gupta empire.
5. The loss of western India must have deprived the Guptas of rich revenues from trade and commerce and crippled them economically.
6. The growing practice of land grants for religious and other purposes must have reduced their revenues still further making it difficult for the Gupta to maintain a large professional army.

### Guptas – Administrative System

**King:** The Gupta kings adopted pompous titles such as maharajadhiraja, parameshvara and paramabhattaraka which signify that they ruled over lesser kings in their empire. Kingship was hereditary. The throne did not always go to the eldest son. The brahmanas compared the king to different Gods. The king was looked upon as Vishnu, the protector and preserver. The goddess Lakshmi is represented invariably on the Gupta coins as the wife of Vishnu.

**Army:** The king maintained a standing army which was supplemented by the forces occasionally supplied by the feudatories. Horse chariots receded into the background and cavalry came to the forefront. Horse archery became prominent in military tactics.

**Revenue:** In the Gupta period, land taxes increased in number, and those on trade and commerce decreased. Land tax was one-fourth to one-sixth of the produce. In addition to this, whenever the royal army passed through the countryside the local people had to feed it. In Central and Western India, the villagers were also subjected to forced labour called Vishti for serving the royal army and officials.

**Judiciary:** The judicial system was far more developed under the Guptas than in earlier times. Several law books were compiled in this period. For the first time civil and criminal laws were clearly

demarcated. Like earlier times, many laws continued to be based on differences in Varnas. The guilds of artisans, merchants and others were governed by their own laws.

**Bureaucracy:** The Gupta bureaucracy was not as elaborate as that of the Mauryas. The most important officers in the Gupta empire were the Kumaramatyas who were appointed by the king in home provinces and possibly paid in cash. Since the Guptas were Vaishyas, recruitment was not confined to the upper varnas only. But several offices came to be combined in the hands of the same person, and posts became hereditary. This weakened the royal control. Higher state officials were paid in cash but some may have been remunerated by land grants.

**Provincial and Local Administration:** The empire was divided into divisions called bhuktis, and each bhukti was placed under the charge of an uparika. The bhukti's were divided into districts called Vishayyas, which were placed under the charge of Vishayapati. In eastern India, the Vishayyas were divided into vithis, which again were divided into villages. The village headman became more important in Gupta times. He managed the village affairs with the assistance of elders. No land transactions could be effected without their consent.

**Urban Administration:** Organised professional bodies were given considerable share in urban administration. The seals from Vaishali show that artisans, merchants and scribes served on the same corporate body, and conducted the affairs of the towns. The administrative board of the district of Kaotivarsha in north Bengal (Bangladesh) included his chief merchant, the chief trader and the chief artisan. Their consent to land transactions was considered necessary. Artisans and bankers were organised into their own separate guilds.

**Feudal Nature:** The major part of the Gupta empire was held by feudatory chiefs who had three obligations. They offered homage to the sovereign by personal attendants at his court, paid tribute to him and presented to him daughters in marriage. In return for these the feudatories obtained charters for ruling in the areas. The charters were marked with the royal Garuda seal. The Guptas also granted fiscal and administrative concessions to priests and administrators. This practice which was started in the Deccan by the Satavahanas, became a regular affair in the Gupta times, particularly in Madhya Pradesh. Religious functionaries were granted land, free of tax forever, and they were authorised to collect from the peasants all the taxes which could otherwise have gone to the emperor. The villages granted to the beneficiaries could not be entered by royal agents, retainers etc. The beneficiaries were also empowered to punish the criminals.

Since much of the imperial administration was managed by feudatories and beneficiaries, the Gupta rulers did not require as many officials as the Mauryas did. Also the Gupta State unlike the Maurya state did not regulate economic activities on any big scale.

## Agrarian Conditions

1. Expansion of agriculture took place on the largest scale in the Gupta period.
2. The state was the exclusive owner of land. Land grants undoubtedly indicate that the king has the supreme ownership of land, otherwise he could not transfer comprehensive rights to the donee. So, though the land was for all intents and purposes that of the peasants, the king on behalf of the state claimed its theoretical ownership.
3. Land could be classified into cultivable land (kshetra), waste land (khila), forest land (aprahat), habitable land (vasti) and pasture land (gapatha sarah).
4. We have references in copper plates to land transactions. During the purchase of a piece of land, certain procedures were followed. In the first instance, the application was sent to the headquarters of the district in whose jurisdiction the land was situated, i.e. the 'pustapala'. The leading men of the nearest village were informed possibly to enable them to offer their objections, if any. If there is no objection and after receiving the concurrence of the 'Vishayapati (district-head)', the Pustapal's department sells the land.

5. Brahmins were conferred agrahara grants. The Nalanda and Gaya grants of Samudragupta are the earliest records that throw light on the agrahara grants. They underlined the privileged position of the brahmanas.
6. Land grants were made even independently to secular parties. Since they were lasting material such as copper, stone etc.

### Trade

1. Fa-Hsien who visited Magadha during the Gupta empire was full of praise for the cities of Magadha and its rich people who supported Buddhism and gave charities.
2. In ancient India, Guptas issued the largest number of gold coins which were called 'dinaras' in their inscriptions.
3. After the conquest of Gujarat, the Guptas issued a good number of silver coins mainly for local exchange.
4. In contrast to those of the Kushanas, the Gupta copper coins are very few. This would suggest that the use of money did not touch the common people so much as it did under the Kushanas.
5. Compared to the earlier period we notice a decline in long-distance trade. Till 550 AD India carried on some trade with the Eastern Roman empire (Byzantine empire) to which it exported silk. Around 550 AD the people of the Eastern Roman empire learnt from the Chinese the art of growing silk, which adversely affected the export trade of India.
6. Trade with China and South-East Asia was through barter exchange. Burma was called as Swarnabhumi and Indonesia as Swarnadwipa.
7. Internal trade declined because of rise of feudal conditions and lack of currency of common use. It had its effect on decline of urban centres on a large scale.

### Social Conditions

1. The supremacy of the brahmanas continued into the Gupta times on account of the land grants to the brahmanas. The brahmanas accumulated wealth and claimed many privileges which are listed in the Narada Smriti, a law book of the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD.
2. The Guptas were originally vaishyas but came to be looked upon as Kshatriyas by the Brahmanas. The brahmanas presented the Gupta kings as possessing the attributes of Gods. The Guptas in turn became great supporters of brahmanas.
3. Vaishyas were involved in agriculture, industry and trade. They were known variously as vanik, sresti, sarthavaha.
4. The position of Sudras improved in the Gupta period because of a change in the economic status of the Sudras. From the seventh century onwards they were mainly represented as agriculturists; in the earlier period they always appeared as servants, slaves and agricultural labourers. The sudras were now permitted to listen to the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Puranas. They could also worship a new god called Krishna and were also allowed to perform certain domestic rites.
5. During the Gupta period, the untouchables increased in number, especially the Chandalas. They appeared in society as early as the fifth century BC, but by the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD their number had become so enormous and their disabilities so glaring that it attracted the attention of the Chinese pilgrim Fa-hsien. He informs that the Chandalas lived outside the village and dealt in meat and flesh. Whenever they entered the town the upper caste people kept themselves at a distance from them because the road was supposed to have been polluted by them.
6. Kayasthas appeared as an important section of society as a class, not a caste. They are mentioned as a class in Yajnavalkya Smriti and Damodarpur copper plate inscription.

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7. The castes proliferated into numerous sub-castes as a result of assimilation of large number of foreigners into the Indian society and also because of the absorption of many tribal people into brahmanical society through the process of land grants.
8. In the Gupta period, like the shudras, women were also allowed to listen to the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Puranas, and advised to worship Krishna.
9. The members of higher varnas came to acquire more and more land which made them more polygamous and more property-minded. In a patriarchal set up they began to treat women as items of property, so much so that a woman was expected to follow her husband to the next world. The first example of the immolation of widow after the death of her husband appears in Gupta times in 510 AD in Eran (Airana) inscription of Bhanugupta.

### Art and Architecture

#### Architecture

The Gupta period witnessed the evolution of the Nagara and Dravida styles. The Gupta art ushers in the history of Indian architecture a formative and creative age with unlimited scope for future development and elaboration.

##### (a) Rock-cut caves

- (i) The rock-cut caves continue the old forms to a large extent, but possess striking novelty by bringing about extensive changes in the ornamentation of the façade and in the designs of the pillars in the interior.
- (ii) The most notable groups of rock-cut caves are found at Ajanta and Ellora (Maharashtra) and Bagh (M.P.). The Udaygiri caves (Orissa) are also of this type.

##### (b) Structural temples: The following five groups may be distinguished among the structural temples:

- (i) flat-roofed square temple
- (ii) flat-roofed square temple with a second storey (Vimana) above
- (iii) square temple with a curvilinear tower (Sikhara) above
- (iv) rectangular temple
- (v) circular temple

The second group of temples shows many of the characteristic features of the Dravida style. The importance of the third group lies in the innovation of a 'Sikhara' that caps the sanctum sanctorium, the main feature of the Nagara style.

##### (c) Stupas: Stupas were also built in large numbers, but the best are found at Sarnath (U.P.), Ratnagiri (Orissa) and Mirpur Khan (Sind).

#### Sculpture

##### (a) Stone Sculpture:

- (i) A good specimen is the well-known erect Buddha from Sarnath.
- (ii) Of the brahmanical images perhaps the most immediately impressive is the Great Boar (varaha) at the entrance of a cave at Udayagiri.

##### (b) Metal statues: The art of casting statues on a large-scale by the cire-process was practised by Guptas craftsmen with conspicuous success.

- (i) A copper image of the Buddha, about eighteen feet high at Nalanda in Bihar
- (ii) Sultanganj Buddha of seven-and-a-half feet.

## **Painting**

- (a) The art of painting seems to have been more in general practice and popular demand in the Gupta period than the art of stone sculpture.
- (b) Remains of paintings of this period are found at Ajanta, Bagh, Badami and other places.
- (c) From the point of technique, the surface of these paintings was perhaps done in a very simple way. In fact the Mural paintings of Ajanta are not true frescoes, for a fresco is painted while the plaster is still damp and the murals of Ajanta were made after it had set.
- (d) However, the art of Ajanta and Bagh shows the Madhyadesa school of painting at its best.

## **Terracotta's and Pottery**

- (a) Clay figurines were used both for religious and secular purposes. We have figurines of Vishnu, Kartikeya, Surya, Durga, Kubera, Nagas etc.
- (b) Gupta pottery remains found at Ahichchhatra, Rajgath, Hastinapur and Bashar afford an outstanding proof of the excellence of pottery. The most distinctive class of pottery of this period is the 'red ware'.

## **Vaishnavism**

1. Vishnu was a minor god in the Early Vedic period. He was worshipped as one of the forms of the Sun in the Rig Veda.
2. Vishnu became a major god in the Later Vedic period, along with Brahma and Shiva.
3. By the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC Vishnu was merged with a god called narayana, and came to be known as Narayana-Vishnu. Originally Narayana was a non-vedic tribal god called bhagavat, and his worshippers were called bhagavatas.
4. Chandogya Upanishad contains the earliest reference to Lord Krishna and gives evidence of his historicity. Chandogya Upanishad says that Krishna was son of Devaki and disciple of Ghora Angiresa.
5. The Mahabharata equates Krishna with Vishnu. So by 200 BC the followers of Vishnu, narayana and Krishna are merged into one. This resulted in the creation of Bhagavatism or Vaishnavism.
6. Bhagavatism was marked by Bhakti and Ahimsa. The non-killing of animals suited the agricultural society. People took to vegetarianism. It also appealed to foreigners as is evident from the conversion of Heliodorus and also the patronised Vaishnavism. Also artisans and merchants belonging to Vaishyas and Sudras also sought refuge in it.
7. Krishna taught in the Bhagavad Gita that even women, Vaishyas and Sudras could seek refuge in him. The Bhagavad Gita dealt with Vaishnava teachings; so did the Vishnu Purana and also to some extent with the Vishnu Smriti.
8. Bhagavatism or Vaishnavism overshadowed Mahayana Buddhism by Gupta times. It preached the doctrine of incarnation, or avatara. History was presented as a cycle of ten incarnations of Vishnu who appeared whenever the social order faced crisis to save it. Gupta kings as Samudragupta and Chandragupta II patronised Vaishnavism.
9. By the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD Vishnu became a member of the trinity of Gods along with Shiva and Brahma. The Bhagavata Purana was written to popularise the virtues of worshiping him. Several religious recitations including the Vishnusahasranama were composed for the benefit of the Vishnu worshippers.
10. Vaishnavism continued to remain popular in the post-gupta period. In South India, it was made popular by saint poets known as Alwars who composed many devotional songs.

11. Garuda was used as the royal emblem of the Guptas.

### Shaivism

1. The word 'Siva' means auspicious.
2. There is no reference to Shiva in the Rig Veda.
3. Rudra is mentioned as the god of destruction in the later Vedic age.
4. The earliest reference to Shiva is found in the Svetasvatara Upanishad. From then onwards, Rudra came to be equated with Shiva.
5. Megasthenes mentions that the Surasenis of Mathura were worshippers of Dionysus (Shiva).
6. In the post-Mauryan period Shiva became a popular god. Coins of Shaka ruler Maues or Moga bear the image of Shiva. Coins of Parthian ruler Gondophernes show Shiva holding trident. Wema Kadphises, a Kushana ruler issued coins with image of Shiva holding trident and bearing an image of Nandi. Huvishka issued Harihara type of coins. Republican states such as Audumbaras and Kunindas also issued coins in praise of Shiva. Yaudheyas issued Kartikeya type of coins.
7. Shiva became more popular in the Gupta period which is evident from findings of Shivalingas and images of Shiva in temples. Some Gupta emperors such as Kumaragupta and Skandagupta promoted Shaivism. Kalidasa was a devotee of Shiva.
8. In the post-Gupta period, Harasavardhana was a devotee of Shiva, Surya and Buddha.
9. Huna rulers Toromana and Mihirakula were also devotees of Shiva and Surya.
10. In South India, the Pallavas patronised Shaivism and so did the Cholas later. Shaivism in South India was popularised by Shaiva bhakti saints and poets known as Nayanars or Adayars who composed songs in devotion of Lord Shiva. Some prominent Nayanars were Apar, Sambandar, Sundarati, Manikkavasagar, Tirumullur and Sekkilar.
11. In course of time, various sub-orders of Shaivism appeared such as Pasupatas, Kapalikas, Kalamukhas and Virshaivism.

### The Vakatakas

The Vakatakas were a powerful dynasty ruling contemporaneously with Guptas. Inscriptions and Puranas testify that in the hey-day of their glory they dominated the entire country of Bundelkhand, central provinces, Berars, northern Deccan up to the sea, besides exercising suzerainty over their weaker neighbours. The Vakatakas it seems were Brahmanas and in their inscriptions they called themselves as Haritaputras.

**Vindyasakti** was the founder of the Vakatakas.

**Pravarasena I** was the son of Vindyasakti. He assumed imperial titles as maharajadhiraja and Samrat. He is said to have performed sacrifices such as Asvamedha, Vajpeya.

**Gautamiputra** was the son of Pravarasena I. He married the daughter of the Bharasiva king, Bhavanaga, but did not ascend the throne.

**Rudrasena I** was the next ruler and is identified with Rudradeva mentioned in the Allahabad pillar inscription as having suffered defeat at the hands of Samudragupta.

**Prithivsena** next came to the throne. His reign was known for peace and prosperity.

**Rudrasena II** was married to Prabhavatigupta, the daughter of Chandragupta II. He rendered help to Chandragupta II in finishing off the Sakas. Under Prabhavatigupta's influence he became a Vaishnavaite. After the death of her husband, Prabhavati ruled on behalf of her minor sons Damodarsen and Divakarsen.

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Pravarasen II built the city of Pravarapura, made it his capital and built a temple of Ramachandra there. He composed a famous Prakrit poem Setubandha. Kalidasa wrote Meghadutam in Pravarasen II's court. After him, the Vakatakas gradually became weak and the Vakatakas power was ultimately shattered some time in the second quarter of the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD by the Kalachuris of the South.

### Contribution of the Vakatakas:

1. **Economy:** The Vakatakas patronised economy by promoting the expansion of agriculture. They gave innumerable land donations to Brahmins and officers of the state. They were given cultivable waste lands which in the long term led to feudalism. The Vakatakas in turn got the support of the feudal lords.

The Vakatakas also patronised trade and commerce and controlled regions through which important trade routes passed. But, they did not issue many coins as did the earlier Satavahanas. Average covered

2. **Religion:** The Vakatakas were patrons of brahmanical religion. Devotees of Vishnu and Shiva. The Vakatakas performed various sacrifices and patronised hindu culture. But they continued protection to Buddhist and Jain traders.
3. **Literature:** Pravarasena II the Vakataka ruler wrote the Prakrit poem Setubanda. Kalidasa wrote Meghadutam in his court. Another Vakataka ruler Sarvasena wrote the book Harivijaya. Vakatakas used Prakrit language for their inscription.
4. The Vakatakas patronised the Ajanta school of paintings which flourished under them.
5. The Vakatakas oversaw the construction of many brahmanical temples during their reign.

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## CHAPTER - 9

### POST-GUPTA PERIOD

#### Harshavardhana (606-647 AD)

**Political Conquests:** Harsha was the son of Prabhakaravardhana, the Pushyabuti king of Thanesvar. Harsha's mother was Yasomati. Harsha's elder brother Rajyavardhana ruled over Thaneswar while Harsha's sister Rajyasri was given in marriage to Grahavarman of Kannauj.

Following the murder of Grahavarman of Kannauj and Rajyasri's confinement, Rajyavardhan attacked Kannauj and defeated the Malava ruler Devagupta but was killed by Sasanka, the ruler of Gauda through treachery. In these circumstances, Harsa ascended the throne at Kannauj in 606 AD and adopted the title of Rajaputra instead of maharaja and took another name Shiladitya.

Immediately on accession he had the double task of punishing his enemies and recovering his sister. Rajyasri who escaped into the Vindhyan forest. He planned on 'digvijaya' to achieve his ends. Harsha accepted an offer of alliance from Bhaskaravarman of Kamarupa. Then Harsha marched into the Vindhyan forest and according to Bana was able to rescue his sister just as she was about to take a plunge in the river to commit suicide. Harsha then launched an operation against Sasanaka of Gauda and according to a book Arya Manjusri Mool Kalpa, there was a skirmish between the two kings with Harsha defeating Sasanka and wreaking havoc on the people of Bengal.

Harsha then collected a large force and according to Hiuan Tsang went from east to west subduing all those who were not obedient; the elephants were not unharnessed nor were the soldiers unhelmetted in about six years when he brought the '5 indies' under his allegiance and became the Lord Paramount of the north. The '5 indies' are stated to be Orissa, Gauda (Bengal), Mithila, Kanyakubja and Svarshtra (Punjab).

According to Banabhatta, Harsha seems to have subdued Sindh and a land of snowy mountains (probably Nepal). The king of Kamarupa (Brahmaputra valley) was an ally of Harsha from the beginning. Between 633-641AD, Harsha attacked Dhruvasena II Baladitya, the Maikraka ruler of Valabhi in Gujarat. For some time, Dhruvasena sought the protection of the Gurjara prince, an ally of Pulkesin II, but then made peace with Harsha who gave his daughter in marriage to him and allowed him to continue his rule in a semi-independent capacity not only over Valabhi but also over certain adjoining kingdom. Opinions differ on Harsha's conquest of Nepal, with some questioning whether Harsha really conquered Nepal.

Harsha's conquests in the Deccan suffered a setback following the defeat inflicted on him by Pulakesin II on the banks of Narmada. This is mentioned in the Aihole inscription of Pulakesin II authored by Ravi Kirti who describes Harsha as the lord of the whole of northern country (sakalottarapatreshvara). Sasanka's death paved the way for the extension of Harsha's empire towards the east. In 643 AD he conquered Kongoda (ganjam). This formed the limit of his empire which included Orissa, 80 townships of which he offered as a gift to a local Buddhist monk Jayasena. Harsha governed his empire on the same lines as the Guptas did, except that his administration had become more feudal and decentralized. Land grants continued to be made to priests alongwith officers.

#### Economy

1. The economy became increasingly more feudal and self-sufficient.
2. The decline of trade and commerce which started during the Gupta period itself went on unabated during Harsha's reign. This is evident from the decline of trade centres, paucity of coins and almost complete disappearance of guilds of traders and merchants.

3. The decline of trade and commerce affected the handicrafts production and even agriculture. The agriculturist now began to produce only that much which was required to meet his own needs and those of locality but not for the market. This led to the rise of a self-sufficient village economy.
4. The self-sufficient village economy in which all the needs of the village were met from within was known as the 'Jajmani' system.

## Society

1. This period witnessed the ascendancy of Varnashramadharma. Both Banabhatta and Hiuen Tsang talk about the existence of various sub-castes called Varnasamkaras. The rise of these castes was due to several causes like violation in the code of marriages and general ethics, the proliferation of crafts and assimilation of several new tribes into the Brahmanical fold.
2. The position of women seems to have suffered a further decline during this period. The institution of 'Svayamvara' declined and there is no instance of its practice in the contemporary literature. Remarriage of widows was not permitted, particularly among the higher varnas. The evil system of dowry, according to Bana, was quite common. Some sources also refer to quite a few examples of the practice of committing 'Sati' by higher 'Varna' women.

## Religion

Harsha was probably a Saiva in faith, but he was not only tolerant of, but actually devoted to other religious sects as well. He endowed numerous religious establishments both brahmanical and buddhist. Later in his life, he seems to have shown a distinct partiality towards Buddhism and forbade the slaughter of animals. He is said to have erected thousands of Buddhist Stupas on the banks of the Ganga, and a number of monasteries at the sacred places of the Buddhists.

## Literature

1. Harsha wrote the books Ratnavali, Naganada and Priyadarshika
2. Banabhatta wrote the books Harshacharita, Kadambari and Parvatiparinay.
3. Hiuen Tsang's account of his experiences in India are in the book 'Si-Yu-Ki'. The biography of Hiuen Tsang is known as Hui-Li.

## Pallavas of Kanchipuram (560-903 AD)

**Simhavishnu:** He was the first important Pallava ruler though Pallavas existed even during the time of Samudragupta's invasion of South India. He is credited with capturing the territory of the Cholas and humiliating his other southern neighbours, including Ceylon.

**Mahendravarman I:** He was defeated by the Chalukyan ruler Pulakesin II. He patronised the Saint Appar and the scholar Bharavi. Mahendravarman I wrote a famous satirical play called 'Mattavilasaprahasan'.

**Narasimhavarman I:** He was the greatest Pallava ruler. He is credited with repelling the second invasion of Pulakesin II, killing him and capturing the Chalukyan capital, Vatapi. Hence he assumed the title of Vatapikaonda (conqueror of Vatapi). He also defeated the Cholas, Cheras and Pandyas. Besides, he sent two naval expeditions to Ceylon and helped his ally, a Ceylonese prince (Manavarman), to capture the throne of Ceylon. Hiuen Tsang visited Kanchipuram during the reign of Narasimhavarman I. Known as 'Mamalla', Narasimhavarman I founded the city of Mamallapuram (Mahabalipuram) and the famous monolithic rock-cut temples.

**Mahendravarman II:** He ruled for a very short period, since he was killed by Chalukya King, Vikramaditya I.

**Paramesvaravarman I:** he also had to face the invading forces of Vikramaditya I, but finally succeeded in defeating and driving them back.

**Narasimhavarman II:** Known also as Rajasimha, his rule is marked by peace and prosperity, literary activity and the construction of large and beautiful temples. He is also said to have sent embassies to China, and maritime trade flourished during his reign.

**Paramesvaravarman II:** But the Pallava kingdom again had to face defeat and humiliation during his reign from Chalukya Vikramaditya II.

**Nandivarman II:** Vikramaditya II again invaded and captured the Pallava capital. Nandivarman-II had to purchase peace by giving his daughter in marriage and paying a huge ransom. During his reign, several old temples were renovated and new ones like the Vaikuntaperumal temple at Kanchi were constructed.

**Successors:** Dantiverman, Nandivarman III, Nripatunga and Aparajita ruled in succession as independent rulers, but the last Pallava ruler Aparajita Pallava was defeated by Aditya Chola by the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century with which began the Chola supremacy in South India.

### Contribution of the Pallavas

1. The Dravidian style of architecture developed under the Pallavas in four stages called the Mahendra group, Narasimha group, Rajasimha group and Nandivarman group.
  - (a) **Mahendra group:** The influence of the cave style of architecture to be seen in this group, e.g. rock-cut temples at Bhairavakonda and Anantesvara temple at Undavalli.
  - (b) **Narasimha group:** The 'rathas' or monolithic temples are small temples, each of which is hewn out of a single rock-boulder. These monolithic temples are found at Mamallapuram.
  - (c) **Rajasimha group:** There are six examples of this group – three at Mahabalipuram (shore temple, Isvara temple and Mukunda temple), one at Panamalai in South Arcot and the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchi.
  - (d) **Nandivarman group:** This group mostly consists of small temples and in no way forms an advance on the achievements of the previous age. The best examples are the temples of Muktesvara and Matangesvara at Kanchipuram.
2. The Pallavas also contributed to the development of sculpture in South India. The Pallava sculpture is indebted to the Buddhist tradition than to any other. It is more monumental and linear in form, thus avoiding the typical ornamentation of the Deccan sculpture. The best example is the 'Descent of the Ganga' or 'Arjuna's Penance' at Mahabalipuram.
3. Education in the early days was controlled by the Jainas and Buddhists. The Jaina institutions were located at Madurai and Kanchi. But soon Brahmanical institutions superseded them. The 'Ghatikas' or brahmanical institutions were attached to the temples and mostly confined to advance study. In the 8<sup>th</sup> century AD the 'maths' also became popular. In all these institutions, Sanskrit was the medium of instruction, because it was also the official language.
4. Both Bharavi and Dandin, the authors of Kiratarjuniya and Dasakumaracharita respectively, lived in the Pallava court. The Pallava king Mahendravarman I wrote the satirical play 'Mattavilasa Prahasana'.
5. The Pallavas patronised trade and commerce. An elaborate network of trading routes were formed. We have references to key trading places called 'Nagarams', the most famous of which was Manigramam.
6. The Pallavas recruited and commanded large armies. They also laid the foundation of a naval squadron which was later taken to the next level by the Cholas.

### Chalukyas of Badami (543-755 AD)

**Pulkesin I:** He was the founder of the Chalukya Dynasty. He established a small kingdom with Badami (Vatapi) as its capital.

**Kirtivarman I:** The son of Pulakesin I, expanded the kingdom by wars against the Kadambas of Banavasi and the Nalas of Bastar.

**Mangalesa:** On the death of Kirtivarman, his brother Mangalesa became the regent, since his son, Pulakesin II was minor.

**Pulakesin II (609-642 AD):** Considered as the greatest of the Badami Chalukyas. The achievements of Pulakesin II are known to us from his Aihole inscription written in Prakrit by his court poet Ravi Kirti. Pulakesin II had to wage a civil war against his uncle Mangalesa to capture power. He defeated the rebel feudatory Appayika, and pardoned his confederate, Govinda. He also established his suzerainty over the neighbours such as Kadambas of Banavasi, the Alupas of South Kanara, the Gangas of Mysore, and the Mauryas of north Konkan. Pulakesin II defeated Harshavardhana on the banks of the Narmada and also got the voluntary submission of Latas, Malwas and Gurjaras. Pulakesin II in his first expedition against Pallava kingdom defeated Mahendravarman I. But in his second expedition against the Pallavas he was defeated by the Pallava king Narasimhavarman I who not only drove back the Chalukyan armies, but also invaded the Chalukya kingdom, killed Pulakesin II and captured Vatapai (Badami) and assumed the title of Vatapikonda. Pulakesin II also sent an embassy to the Persian king Khusrau II and received an embassy from him. Hiuen Tsang, the Chinese traveller visited the Chalukyan kingdom during the times of Pulakesin II.

**Vikramaditya I:** After about twelve years, he not only drove out the occupying Pallava forces, but also consolidated the kingdom and plundered the Pallava capital, Kanchi.

**Vinayaditya:** His reign was generally peaceful and prosperous.

**Vijayaditya:** It was the longest and also the most prosperous and peaceful reign.

**Vikramaditya II:** His reign is significant for the successful invasion of the Pallava kingdom three times, and repelling the Arab invasion of South Gujarat.

**Kirtivarman II:** the last Chalukyan ruler of Badami, defeated by Dantidurga, the founder of the Rashtrakuta dynasty.

### Contribution of the Chalukyas

1. The central government under the Chalukyas of Badami exercised a paternalistic control over the village administration which is unlike the administrative practice of South India.
2. The army of the Chalukyas consisted of a small standing army, but civil administration whenever the need arose.
3. They patronised education and learning. They promoted both Sanskrit and Prakrit.
  - (a) A famous Chalukyan feudal lord Gangaraja Durvinita wrote a famous book on grammar known as Shabdavatara. He also translated the book Brihatkatha written by Gunadya into Sanskrit.
  - (b) Udayadeva wrote a grammar book known as Jainendra Vyakarana.
  - (c) Somadeva Suri wrote the book Nitivakyamrita about morality.
4. Though Chalukyas were Brahmanical Hindus, they promoted other religions also. Jainism made much progress under them.
5. The Chalukyas developed the Deccan or Vesara style in the building of structural temples. They perfected the art of stone-building, i.e. stones finely joined without mortar. The Buddhists, Jainas and Brahmins completed with each other in building cave temples. Though the cave frescoes began earlier, some of the finest specimens belonged to the Chalukya era. At Ajanta, we notice a painting depicting the reception given to a Persian embassy by Pulakesin II.
6. The Deccan or Vesara style of temple of the Chalukyas are constructed in two phases, first at Aihole and Badami and then the second phase at Pattadkal.

**1. First Phase**

- (i) Aihole (City of temples)
  - (a) Ladh Khan temple at Aihole – a flat roofed building.
  - (b) Durga temple – an attempt to integrate a Buddhist Chaitya into a brahmanical temple.
  - (c) Hacimaligudi – very similar to Durga temple but smaller than it.
  - (d) Jain temple at Meguti – Shows some progress in the execution of structural temples, but it is unfinished.
- (ii) Badami (Vatapi)
  - (a) Melagitti Sivalaya – small but finely proportioned temple.
  - (b) 4 rock cut halls – 3 of Hinduism and 1 of Jainism.

**2. Second Phase**

- (a) Pattadkal – Ten temples of which four are in northern style and six are in southern style.
- (b) Papanatha temple is built in northern style.
- (c) Virupaksha and Sangameshwar temple are built in Southern style.

**Ideas in Science and Technology:**

Ancient Indians made immense contributions in science and technology.

**Physics:** Ancient Indians conceived of the universe as composed of panchabhutas on five elements – water, earth, land, fire, ether – each a medium of sense perception. They certainly knew the existence of atom and even molecules long before the Greeks. The atom was considered eternal, invisible and occupying the minutest space. The Vaisesika school elaborated the atomic theory as no other school did. The atomic theories of ancient India were brilliant and imaginative explanations of the physical structures of the world, and many of them anticipated the theories of modern physics as when Brahmagupta (later 6<sup>th</sup> and early 7<sup>th</sup> century) anticipated Newton by declaring that 'All things fall to earth by law of nature, for it is the nature of the earth to attract and keep things.'

**Mathematics:** Indians made three distinct contributions regarding the notation system, decimal system and zero usage.

The Indian notation system was adopted by the Arabs who then spread it in the western world. The Indian numerals are called Arabic in English, but the Arabs themselves called their numbers hindsa. These numerals are found in Ashokan inscriptions of 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.

Indians were the first to use the decimal system. The earliest epigraphic evidence of use of decimal system in beginning of 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D. The famous mathematician Aryabhatta was acquainted with it. The Chinese learnt this system from Buddhist missionaries, and the Western world borrowed it from Arabs.

Zero was discovered by Indians in 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. Since then, it was considered as a separate numeral and used in this sense in Arithmetic. Al Beruni says that it was Brahmagupta who gave zero its status in Mathematics. Many scholars contend that the level of Mathematics reached by Indians by about Gupta times was far ahead of the rest of the world, they had a clearer conception of abstract number, distinct from numerical quantity. Although both Greeks and Indians contributed to discipline of algebra, in W. Europe it was furrowed not from Greece but from Arabs who borrowed it from India. Indians devised simple algebra which allowed more complicated calculations than were possible for Greeks to accomplish.

Brick constructions of Harappa show that in the Northwest, people had sound knowledge of geometry. Knowledge of Geometry is reflected in the Sulvasutras of 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Aryabhatta formulated the

rule for finding out the area of a triangle which led to origin of Trigonometry. Aryabhatta's famous work in Gupta Period, Suryasiddhanta is one the like of which is not found in contemporary transient east.

**Astronomy:** Astronomy made great progress because planets came to be regarded as Gods and their movements were closely observed. The earliest source dealing exclusively with astronomy is the Jyotisha vedanga (500 B.C.) which contains rules for calculating the position of new and full moon amongst the 27 nakshatras.

Aryabhatta remodelled astronomy on a scientific basis. He explained the true cause of solar and lunar eclipses, stated that the sun is stationary and the earth rotates around the sun. He gave the value of  $\pi = 3.1416$ , he stated that the earth was spherical in shape in his book called Aryabhattiya composed in 499 A.D.

Varahamihira, another astronomer lived in the Gupta period. His magnum opus, Brihatsamhita belongs to the 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D. He stated that the moon rotates around the earth and the earth rotates around the sun. He had encyclopaedic knowledge and was eminent in other sciences also. His work is an authoritative source on Astrology.

**Chemistry:** Development of metallurgy can be treated to the Harappan Period. Excellent specimens of iron tools and implements unearthed in the Megalithic tombs of south India (around 500 B.C.). Around 100 A.D., there was greater development of metallurgy with large scale production of various metals like gold, silver, copper, Iron, brass and other alloys. Indian steel products were exported to the west during the Post-Mauryan period. Further development in Gupta period as can be seen in huge copper statue of Buddha from Sultanganj and Iron Pillar of Mehrauli at Delhi of Gupta ruler Chandragupta II.

**Medicine:** Beginning is in the form of Ayurveda (the science of life) emerging out of the Vedas. A large number of hymns in Atharvaveda associated with Ayurveda. Charka in 100 A.D. compiled Charakasamhita refers to various diseases with cure and treatments, also about Prevention and control through diet.

Susruta composed the Susrutasamhita which talks about various kinds of diseases and operations with anaesthesia, surgical instruments, cataract, rhinoplasty etc.

**Grammar and Linguistics:** Every Vedic Prayer and every mantra should be recited with meticulous correctness, this led to production of Sanskrit grammar as in Astadhyayi of Panini in 400 B.C. and Mahabhasya of Patanjali 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.

## Six Schools of Philosophy

By the beginning of the Christian era, six schools of philosophy developed in India. All these schools have atleast two doctrines in common-Transmigration of souls and belief in Salvation (release from transmigration).

**Vedanta:** Vedanta means end of the veda or the goal of the veda. The Brahmasutra of Badrayana compiled in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. formed it's basic text on which commentaries were written later by Shankaracharya in the 9<sup>th</sup> century A.D. and Ramanuj in the 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D. The fundamental tenet of this school is 'tat tvam asi' which means 'thou art that' signifying the identity of the individual soul with brahma which is the universal soul. The individual soul is not a part of or emanation of the brahma but identical with it. Brahma is the only reality and the world around us is an illusion (maya) which we fail to understand because of our ignorance. So, it is through knowledge that we realize the knowledge of the self, he then realises the knowledge of the brahma and thus attains salvation. Vedanta is also known as Uttaramimana.

**Mimansa:** It is concerned with the practical side of Vedic religion as found in the brahmanas and the literature on ritual. According to Mimana, Vedas contain the eternal truth. It mainly discusses the sacred ceremonies and the rewards gained from their performance. It says that articulated sounds are eternal and there is a connection between a word and a sense, eventually leading to the doctrine of

sphota. So, in order to attain salvation, the mimansa school strongly recommended the performance of Vedic sacrifices.

**Nyaya:** It's a school of analysis and was developed as a system of logic. Nyaya was founded by Akshapada, literally the eye footed. The tenants of this system were set forth in the Nyayasutra of Gotama. Gotama considered that salvation can be attained through the acquisition of knowledge. Gotama recognized four forms of true knowledge-perception, inference, analogy and credible testimony. Inference, however, overshadows the other three as a means for attaining knowledge. This school influenced Indian scholars who took to systematic thinking and reasoning.

**Vaisesika:** The school derives it's name from the word Visesha (particularity). The founder of this school is uluka kanda. Initially, the Vaisesika school was an atheistic school which promulgated an atomistic account of the universe. It was based on the concept that everything in this world (except time, space, consciousness, mind, soul) is composed of various combinations of atoms which remain after a material object has been reduced to it's smallest part. It marked the beginning of physics in Indian. When the Vaisesika school merged with Nyaya system, it became theistic through the introduction of the concept of God.

**Samkhya:** It literally means 'count'. Founded by Kapila. The monistic theory of early Upanishads was opposed by Kapila who founded Samkhya system which is dualistic in character. It admits of two entities prakriti (nature) and purusha (spirit) which are without beginning and end but essentially different. This system talks of the mutual relation between these two entities. According to Kapila, matter is not illusory, but is real. Souls are not conceived as emanations from the worldly soul but as infinite multitude of individual souls. Initially, the Samkhya system was atheistic, however under the influence of the yoga system with which it coalesced, it became theistic.

**Yoga:** Yoga system is complementary to Samkhya system. It's founder was Patanjali. According to yoga school, a person can attain salvation through meditation and physical application. Practise of control over pleasure, senses and bodily organs is central to this system. In order to obtain salvation, physical exercises in various postures called asanas are prescribed and breathing exercises called pranayama is recommended. Through these methods, the mind gets diverted from worldly mothers and achieves concentration.

The above six systems of philosophy are idealistic in nature and promote the notion of attaining salvation. But within these six system, samkhya and Vaishesika systems also promote the materialist view of life. Materialistic ideas also appear in the doctrines of Ajivikas, a heterodox sect in the time of the Buddha. But, it was Charvaka who was the main expounder of the materialistic philosophy. This philosophy came to be known as the Lokayata, which means the ideas derived from the common people. It underlined the importance of intimate contact with the world (loka) and showed lack of belief in the other world. He denied the existence of God and was opposed to the quest for spiritual salvation. He accepted the reality of only those things which could be experienced by human senses and organs.

## EARLY MEDIEVAL INDIA (600 - 1200 CE)

### INTRODUCTION

Historians have been long debating the nature of the society, polity and economy of early medieval India.

- The feudalism school described the period as an age marked by political fragmentation, the transformation of peasants into serfs, and a decline of urban centres and the money economy. The feudalism hypothesis has been applied to both north as well as south India.
- For south India there is another interpretative framework - the **segmentary state model** which presents the kings of this age as ritual figures, devoid of the **two important groups of royal power - a revenue infrastructure and a standing army**.
- A third major interpretative framework for early medieval India suggests that in many parts of the subcontinent, three centuries were marked by the formation and proliferation of state at the regional level. This hypothesis can be connected with the more specific argument that the early medieval period was one of urban change, but not of urban decay.
- Much of the older historiography of this period focused on Pan-Indian or at least trans-regional patterns but the more recent research highlights the regional and sub-regional specifics and variations.

### Political Narrative and Political Structure

The contours of the kingdoms of early medieval India were fluid and are difficult to define.

- Kingdoms are more easily identified by their nuclear areas and political centres than by their boundaries.
- There were large kingdoms like - Cholas, Rashtrakutas, Palas and Pratiharas.

### The Deccan

The political history of Peninsular India during 600-900 CE was marked by internecine warfare between the Chalukyas of Badami known as the western Chalukyas, Pallavas of Kanchi and Pandyas of Madurai.

- All three rose to power in the 6<sup>th</sup>C, but in the mid 8<sup>th</sup>C, the Chalukyas made way for the Rashtrakutas of Manyakheta.
- Apart from the Chalukyas of Badami, there were two other branches of the lineage who ruled independently the Chalukyas of Lata and the eastern Chalukyas of Vengi.
- From time to time, the eastern Gangas of Mysore and the eastern Chalukyas got embroiled in events by taking sides in the conflicts between the western Chalukyas, Pallavas and Pandyas.

### The Far South

The political history of the far south of this period was dominated by the Pallavas, Pandyas, Cheras and Cholas.

### Royal Land Grants

- Royal land grants are a major source for the history of early medieval India and are central to debates concerning this period. The incidence of grants by kings to Brahmanas increased significantly during 600-1200A.D.

- One view said that land grant to Brahmana had a political dimension.
- The feudalism hypothesis interprets the land gifted to Brahmanas (Brahmadeyas) as a cause as well as a symptom of political fragmentation.

## The impact of the land grant to the Brahmanas

### (1) Feudalism School

It argues that land grants led to an increasing subordination and oppression of rural groups by Brahmana donees.

### (2) Burton Stein

He speaks of a Brahmana – peasant alliance in early medieval South India.

#### Fact

- The fact that most of the land grants carried with them a tax free status meant that villagers were supposed to handover various dues to the donees.
- The fact that the donees were also often given rights over natural resources of that area would have affected the right enjoyed by the village community.
- In economic terms the relationship between Brahmana donees and other rural groups was marked by dominance and exploitation.
- Increasing rural stratification sharpened socio-economic conflict although direct references to such conflicts are few and far between.
- However, the degree of social stratification varied in different areas.

## Historical Process in Early Medieval South India

### The Nature of South Indian State

#### (1) Traditional Historiography

The writing of pioneering scholar such as Nilakantha Sastri represents a narrative, which was tinged with nationalist fervour, and there was a tendency to glorify the Chola state, which was presented as a highly centralized empire.

- Other scholars associated with this approach are A. Appadorai, T.V. Malalingam.

#### (2) Burton Stein's Model (segmentary model)

He criticised the above argument.

- Central to Stein's alternative model were the concepts of sacred kingship, segmentary state, peasant society, and peasant state.
- According to Stein, the theory as well as practice of south Indian kingship reflects a sacred kingship rather than bureaucratic or constitutional kingship.
- The effective power of kings and their control over people and resources were confined to the core areas around their political centres, outside which kings were basically ritual figures.
- Land revenue was extracted only from a limited area and states were dependent on looting expeditions for their sustenance.
- Stein denied the existence of a Chola bureaucratic machinery through which the state could have made its presence and control felt at the local level.
- He also denied the existence of a Chola standing army, arguing that military power was distributed among various groups including peasants, merchants and artisans.

- Deprived of the supports of bureaucracy, revenue collection machinery of any significant dimension and standing army, the hypothesis of a centralized Chola state collapses.

### (3) Criticism of Stein's Theory

- It is difficult to accept his description of early medieval South Indian Kingship as purely-Sacral. Such a description ignores the basis of enduring power and military success achieved by dynasties such as the Cholas.
- Secondly war and loot were certainly part and parcel of the politics of ancient and early medieval kingdoms, but the formation and persistence of empires such as the Maurya, Gupta, Satavahana and Chola indicates that they were based on something more than sporadic looting expeditions. Some sort of administrative structure and revenue infrastructure did exist in these polities, and long term or sustained military success was ultimately based on the state's ability to mobilize and control people and resources.
- Stein also creates an artificial dichotomy between ritual sovereignty and real power. In fact, he confuses effective political or coercive power with centralized control.
- The research of Karashima indicates that several titles in Chola inscriptions refer to administrative offices, and that the Chola kings made certain attempts to centralized their administration. This is confirmed by the study of tax terms by various scholars.
- Steins description of the early medieval South Indian states as peasant states is even more questionable and seems to represent an extreme reaction to the idea of a highly centralized monarch. The existence of corporate village organisation does not indicate that peasants exercised political power at a higher level.

### (4) Other Models

- The feudalism model has been applied to early medieval South India by scholars such as Kesavan Veluthat and R.N. Nandi.
- Other scholars prefer to side step both the segmentary and feudal models and to focus on specific issues; for instance Heitzman discusses the mode of production and the links between land, labour and the State structures.

### Administrative Structures

Early medieval states of South India were clearly not as powerful or centralized as suggested by Shastri nor as ineffectual as suggested by Stein.

- The important functionaries associated with the royal court included the King's advisors and priests.
- Chola inscription mentions the Brahmana Purohit and Rajaguru.
- The Pallavas and Cheras had Council of Ministers and the Pandya inscriptions refers to mantrins (ministers) who may have been organised into a council.
- The large number of terms for offices and officials in the Chola inscriptions compared to those of the Pallavas, Pandyas and Cheras suggest an expansion of the administrative structure, especially from the reign of Rajaraja I (985-1016) onwards. After the reign of Kulottunga I (1070-1122), there is a decline in such references, indicating that a reverse process had set in.
- The Cholas had a large land revenue department consisting of several rungs, but it was largely concerned with maintaining accounts. The assessment and collection of revenue were undertaken by corporate bodies such as Ur, Nadu, Sabha and Nagaram and sometimes by local chieftains who passed the revenue on the centre.
- The many military expeditions of the kings of early medieval South India suggest an effective army organisation, but details are meagre.

- There was a hereditary element in their selection and they seem to have been given assignments of land revenue.
- There was some sort of standing army, recruited and maintained by the state and the Senapati and Dandanayakam were important military officers. Chola inscriptions mention several military contingents.
- The expedition to Sri Lanka during the reign of Rajaraja-I and Shri Vijaya expedition during the reign of Rajendra-I are often cited as evidence of a Chola Navy.

## Rural Society

(i) Burton Stein described the society of early Medieval South as a peasant society. By this he meant the following:

- Stein acknowledge that caste principles of hierarchy and inequality gave an important specific quality to Indian peasant society, but argued that this feature could not be used to raise serious doubts about whether this was indeed a peasant society.
- Stein's treatment of the peasantry as a virtually undifferentiated mass at the most divided between lower and dominant sections is questionable.
- Another problematic aspect of Stein's hypothesis is his description of the relationship between Brahmanas and peasants as an alliance.

## Feature of South Indian Village Life

- It is evident that the basic unit of the rural society was the Ur. this term refers to the villages themselves as well as to the village assemblies.
- A hierarchy of rights and status existed at the village level.
- The Vellalas were identified with the Shudra Varna, but unlike the North, the Shudra tag did not carry with it convocations of a lowly social status and discrimination.
- This is because the Vellala were an economically powerful group of the wealthy land holders. This gave them a status that was almost as high as that of the Brahmanas.
- Karashima suggests that there was an important differences in the pattern of landholding in Brahmadeya and brahmadeya villages. While individual holding existed in the former, communal holding prevailed in non-brahmdeya villages.

## Existence of Corporate bodies in the rural and urban spheres

A striking feature of the history of the early medieval South India is the existence of a number of strong corporate bodies in the rural and the urban spheres.

### (1) UR

The Ur was the corporate body of the Vellanvagai villages (Non-brahmdeya villages).

- The members of this corporate body consisted of the tax-paying landowners of the village.
- The Ur dealt with various matters related to land management such as land sale, gift and tax exemptions.

### (2) The Sabha

- The Sabha was the Brahmana assembly in brahmdeya villages.
- Membership was governed by criteria such as property ownership, family antecedents, learning and good conduct.

- The Sabha was concerned with managing landed property, including property associated with temples. Its duties included collecting revenue and maintaining accounts. It could also supervise religious activities in the temple.
- Going against the Sabha's decision was considered a serious offence punishable by social ostracism.

### (3) Nadu

Recent scholarship suggests that the Nadu, the locality consisting of several settlements, rural or urban was a more important unit than the village in early medieval South India. The term Nadu also referred to the assembly of the locality. Nadu were usually named after one of their villages. It is difficult to identify the exact number of Nadus in the Chola kingdom.

- The fact that Nadus varied a great deal in size indicates that they were not artificial administrative divisions created by the state.
- Members of the Nadu assembly were known as natter. They formed an influential corporate body that functioned collectively and they figured among the people addressed in royal inscription.
- The Nadu was the basic unit of revenue and the natter played an important role in revenue matters. They were responsible for assessment and tax collections, passing on taxes to the various Nadu-level officers of the kings.
- The natter also played an important role in managing irrigation works; they donated lands to temples and were custodians of gifts made by others.

### Urban Processes

The early medieval period represents a major phase of urban growth in South India. The hypothesis of urban decay has no validity whatsoever for this region.

- There were close connections between cities, kings and temples in South India. The background to these links included the increasing power of the Chola state; the increasing popularity of Vaishnava and Shaiva bhakti, and the emergence of the temple as a prominent religious institution in the urban landscape.
- In the late Pallava and early Chola periods, there was a significant shift of royal patronage from gifts to Brahmanas towards gifts to temples.
- Earlier kings of South India had built and patronized temples. But the Cholas constructed a large number of new, architecturally elaborate temples and also rebuilt some of the stone temples in stone.
- The magnificent temples at Tanjavur and Gangaikondacholapuram, were architectural proclamation of the close connection between the political and religious domains.
- The area around the temple formed the city's inner circuit. This was where the political and priestly elites lived.
- Outside this was an outer residential circuit, which housed other urban groups such as merchants.
- The temple generated a demand for materials as well as services of various kinds.
- Apart from the king, members of the royal family made many gifts to the temple.

### Trade and Traders

- The ports and market towns of south India were involved in a flourishing transit trade as well as direct trade with far flung areas.
- Mamallapuram ports developed under the Pallavas and Nagapattinam became prominent in the Chola period.

- The Chola kings promoted trade in various ways, including by setting up erivirappattanas. These were protected mercantile towns, which emerged as important centres of trade.
- Some of the Chola, military expeditions such as those to Sri Lanka in the 1080's and to ports in the Malaysian Peninsula and Indonesian Islands in 1025 and 1070's were probably more than looting expeditions and aimed at controlling important trade routes.
- The expanding contact between South India and South East Asia are reflected in inscriptions and sculptures. Two Chola period images were discovered at Vieng Sra and a Surya image of the Chola style was found at Java.
- There was reciprocal interaction between the elites of south, southeast and east Asia. The larger land grant refers to the king of Shri Vijaya and Kadaram patronizing the building of a Buddhist Monastery at Nagapattinam. A trade mission was sent by Rajaraja Chola to China in 1015.
- There was evidence of existence of powerful guilds in early medieval south India. They were not only in internal trade but also long distance trade especially with southeast Asia.
- The guilds were based on occupation and economic interest and its membership cut across lines of caste and religion.
- As Chola power waned in the 12<sup>th</sup>C the merchant guilds of South India became increasingly independent and less dependent on royal support.

## The Religious Sphere 600-1200 CE

The religious development in early medieval India can be seen as at the level of popular worship, the focus was on devotional worship in temples and on pilgrimage.

The Hindu cultures especially those associated with the worship of Vishnu, Shiva and Shakti became increasingly popular.

- The Tantric tradition became more visible and exerted its influence over Hindu, Buddhist and to a lesser extent Jaina traditions.
- The relationship between different cultures and sects was partly marked by interaction and a certain level of Syncretism. For instance, the Jaina Tirthankara Rishabha was turned into an avatar of Vishnu in the Bhagavata purana. Certain puranas include the Buddha among the incarnation of Vishnu. The Brihadishvara temple at Tanjore has a large image of a seated Buddha to the right of the main gateway, and the Buddha under a Bodhi tree is depicted in some relief carving around the temple.
- Many early medieval sites show a juxtaposition of shrines belonging to different religious tradition.
- One of the most spectacular instance of this is at Ellora, in the Aurangabad district of Maharashtra. From the 6<sup>th</sup> Century CE onwards artisans began chiselling a series of Buddhist cave at the southern end of the basalt lava outcrop, as well as several Hindu caves and shrines at the northern end.
- One of the most spectacular of the Ellora shrines is the Kailashnath temple built in the 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> C. Jaina caves were added to the northern end at about this time.
- Similarly at Badami, Vaishnava, Shaiva and Jaina caves stand next to each other.

## Shankara and Advaita Vedanta

One of the most influential thinkers of the time was Shankara, who lived in the late 8<sup>th</sup> C to early 9<sup>th</sup> C.

- Shankara was one of the most influential proponents of Vedanta. His version of Vedanta is known as Advaita Vedānta.

## VAJIRAM & RAVI

- The Upanishads form the last part (ant) of the Vedas. They and the philosophies based on them are therefore called Vedanta (sometimes referred to as Uttara Mimansa).
- The earliest formal exposition of Advaita or non-dualistic Vedanta was put forward by Gaudapada in the 7<sup>th</sup> or the 8<sup>th</sup> C in his Mandukyakarika, a verse commentary on the Mandukya Upanishad.
- He held that worldly objects were similar to things seen in a dream. Reality is one (a-dvaita) and idea of plurality is due to maya (illusion born out of ignorance).
- Gaudapada's ideas were developed further by Shankara.
- According to Shankara, the performance of vedic sacrifices was for people who wanted to attain material, worldly gains, but the Upanishada contained the way to supreme knowledge.
- In his monistic doctrine Brahman is the ultimate reality, it is without qualities (nirguna). It is pure consciousness, eternal and unchanging. All change and plurality is only apparent.
- The goal of Advaita Vedanta is liberation from the cycle of rebirth which consists of the realization of the oneness of the atman with brahma.

### South Indian Bhakti: Alvaras and Nayanars

The Alvar and Nayanar saints of South India gave a new emphasis and expression to Vaishnava and Shaiv devotionalism, one that was deeply rooted in the Tamil land, language and ethos.

- The roots of South Indian Bhakti can be traced to certain features in late Sangam poetry.
- Patan poems and bhakti songs both have an intense, personal tone, in the context of bhakti, however, the focus shifts from the king to the God, praising the latter and beseeching him to bestow deliverance on his devotees.
- Alvar and Nayanmar poetry reflects a devotion that is at once intimate, intense, and ecstatic.

### Social Significance and impact of the Bhakti Tradition

#### (1) On Women

- In the case of south Indian bhakti the hagiographies and songs of the bhaktins indicate that there was a fundamental difference in the experience of bhakti for men and women.
- In the case of male saints there was no contradiction between the life of a householder and devotion towards the god.
- However, the female body directly impinged on the path of the bhaktin. The bhaktin could not combine marriage and family with devotion.
- The claims of women to asceticism, priesthood, and indeed to salvation, have always been bitterly contested.
- Throughout history woman have usually responded to their spiritual calling only by breaking off ties with their family and have risked being labelled as rebels and deviants.

#### (2) On Society

- Although its leadership was dominated by elite groups, especially Brahmanas, and although it did not overturn existing social relations bhakti did create a religious community within which traditional social distinctions could be transcended, at least with regard to the relationship between the bhakta and his/her god.
- D.D. Kosambi suggested that bhakti with its focus on devotion and loyalty was an ideology well suited to the needs of the feudal state.
- This argument was extended subsequently by some historians who argued that the emergence of temples as landed magnates made them part of the entrenched feudal set-up. Because the

bhakti movement was a temple based movement, the feudal level was extended to it, and it was argued that the movement in fact not only reflected but legitimized feudal social relations.

- However there are a number of problems with this characterization of early medieval India in general and the role of temples in particular as feudal.
- Apart from this fact, it can also be noted that labelling bhakti as a feudal ideology conceals the fact that it did, at least to some extent, question prevailing hierarchies, and it did expand the social contours of sacred space.